VOLUME 6

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GANESHA
DASHA AVATAR
Devi Choudhurani
THE THREE GURUS
GURU NANAK
GURU TEGH BAHADUR
GURU GOBIND SINGH
SOORDAS
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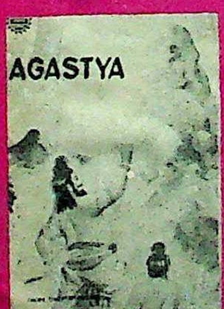
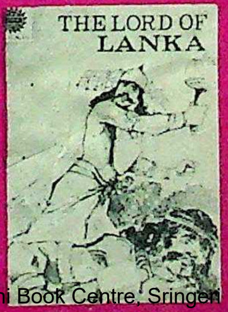


AGASTYA

ANIRUDDHA


THE LORD OF LANKA

THE LORD OF LANKA

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GHATOTKACHA

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GHATOTKACHA

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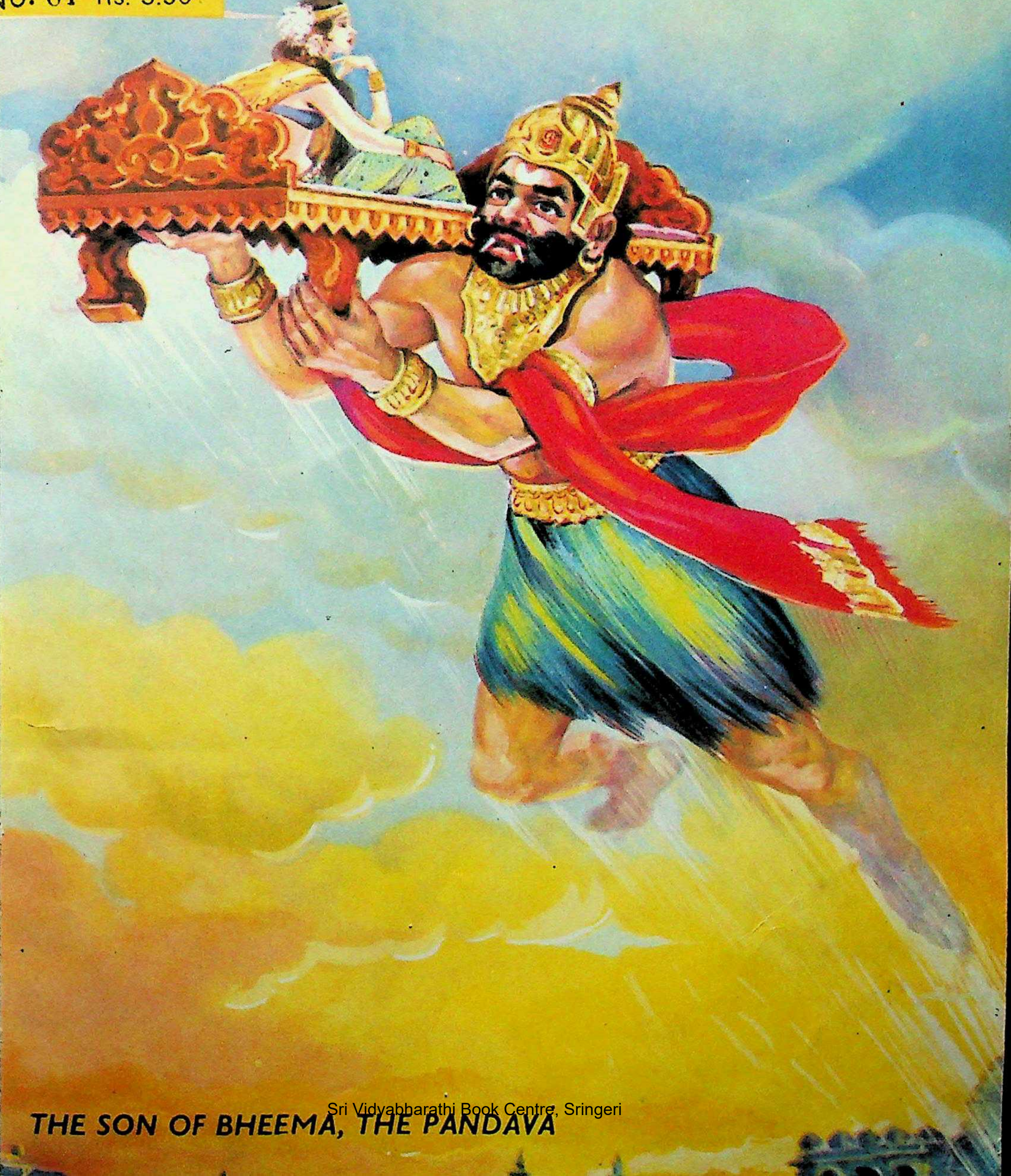

THE SON OF BHEEMA, THE PANDAVA

Ghatotkacha was one of the finest characters in the "Mahabharata"—affectionate and kind even though he was a Rakshasa. Perhaps that was because he was only half a Rakshasa, being the son of Bheema and the Rakshasi Hidimbaa. From his mother he learnt all the arts of the Rakshasas. From his father he inherited an affectionate and chivalrous temperament. He was an invaluable ally to the Pandavas in times of trouble—he appeared before them whenever they thought of him.

The theme of Vatsala's wedding, a very popular one in South India, is much exploited in ballets and stories. It was Ghatotkacha, who with his Rakshasa hordes and their magical powers, made the wedding of Abhimanyu and Vatsala possible. This story is not found in the Mahabharata or in Sanskrit literature. It seems to have evolved at a much later date, as a legend in Telugu and Kannada. The exponents of the art of Harikatha count this story as the most popular one in their repertoire and it has been handed down by word of mouth for generations.

Our AMAR CHITRA KATHA is derived partly from the Mahabharata and partly from the legend.

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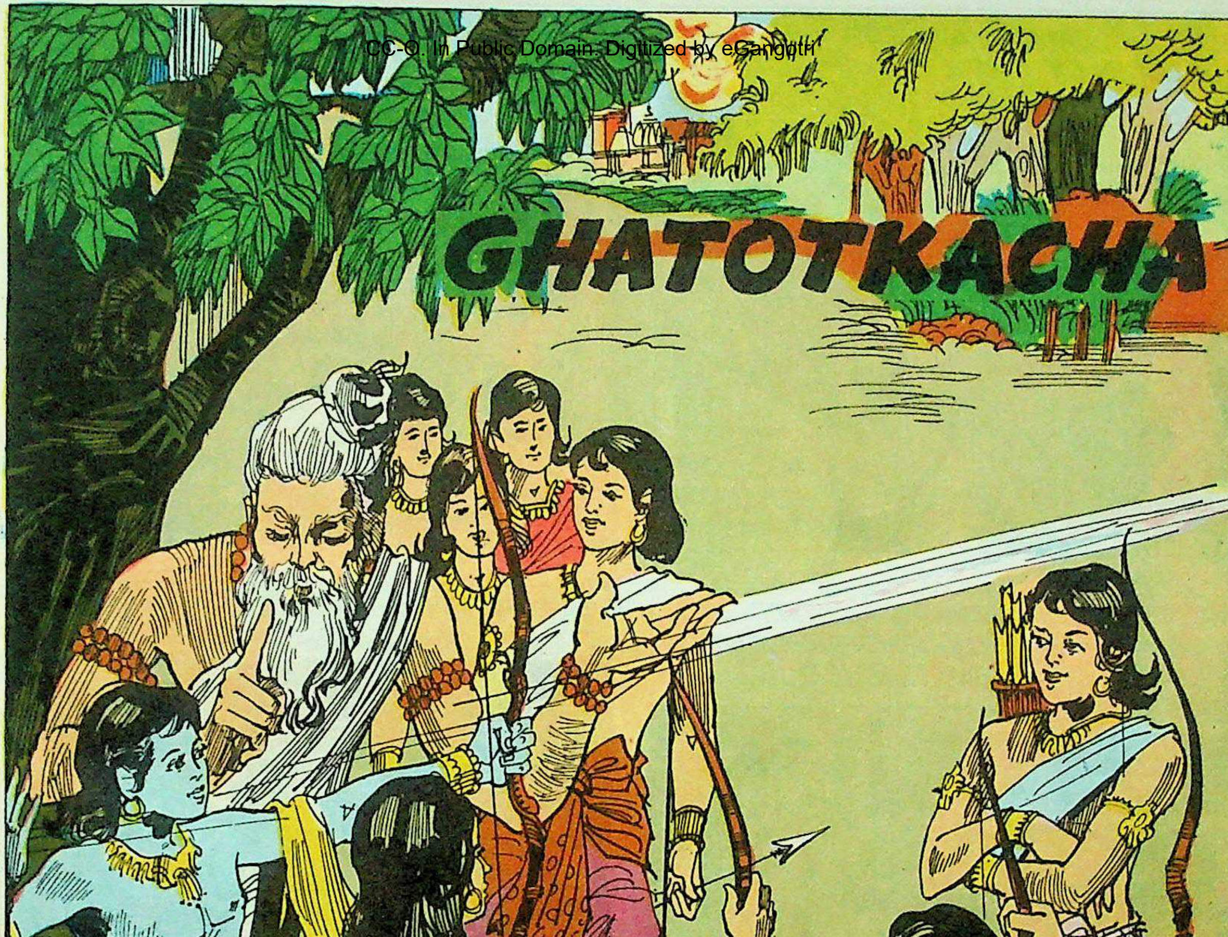
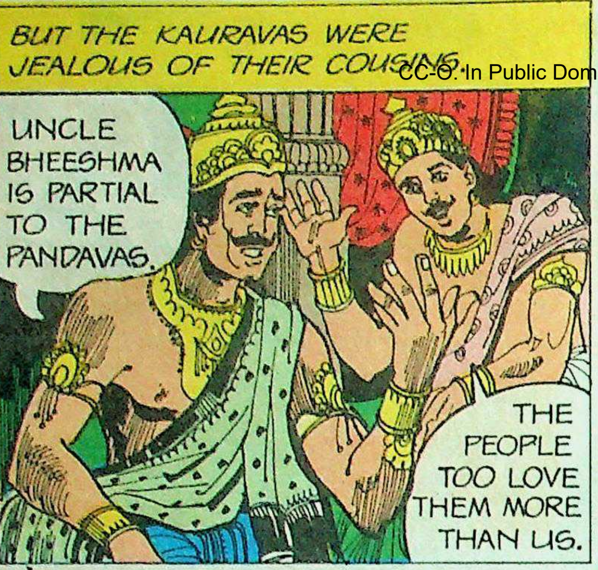
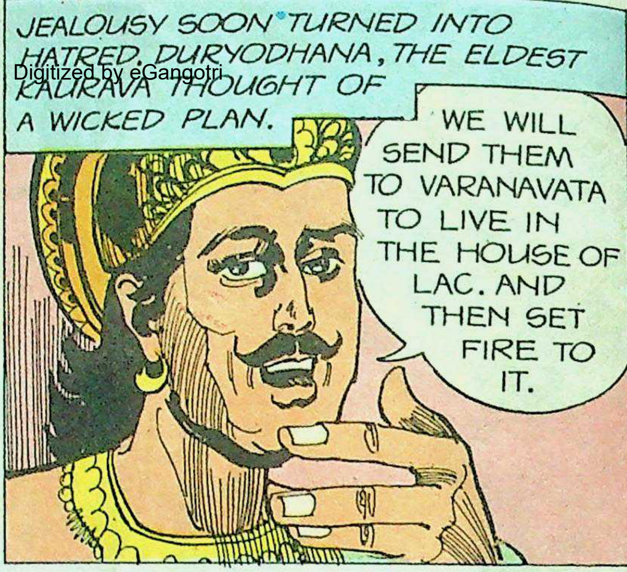
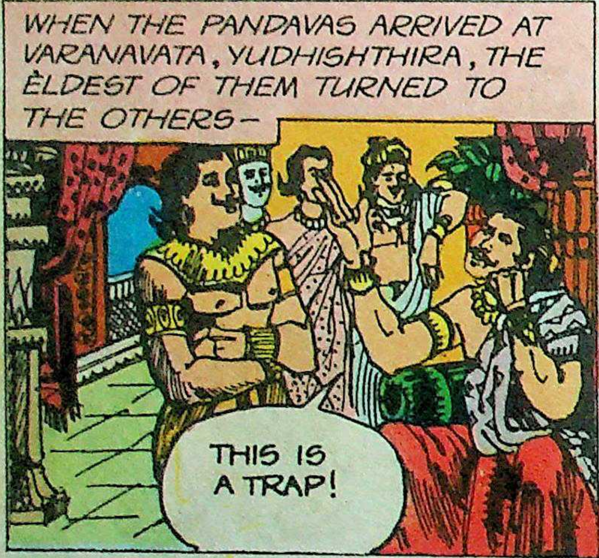
GHATOTKACHA

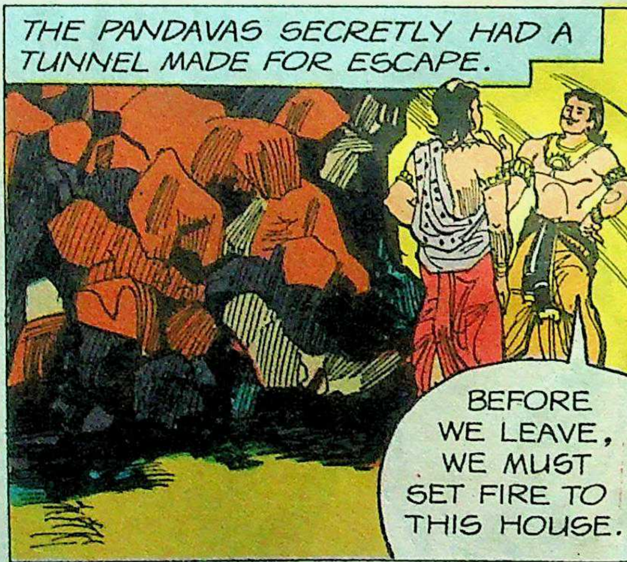


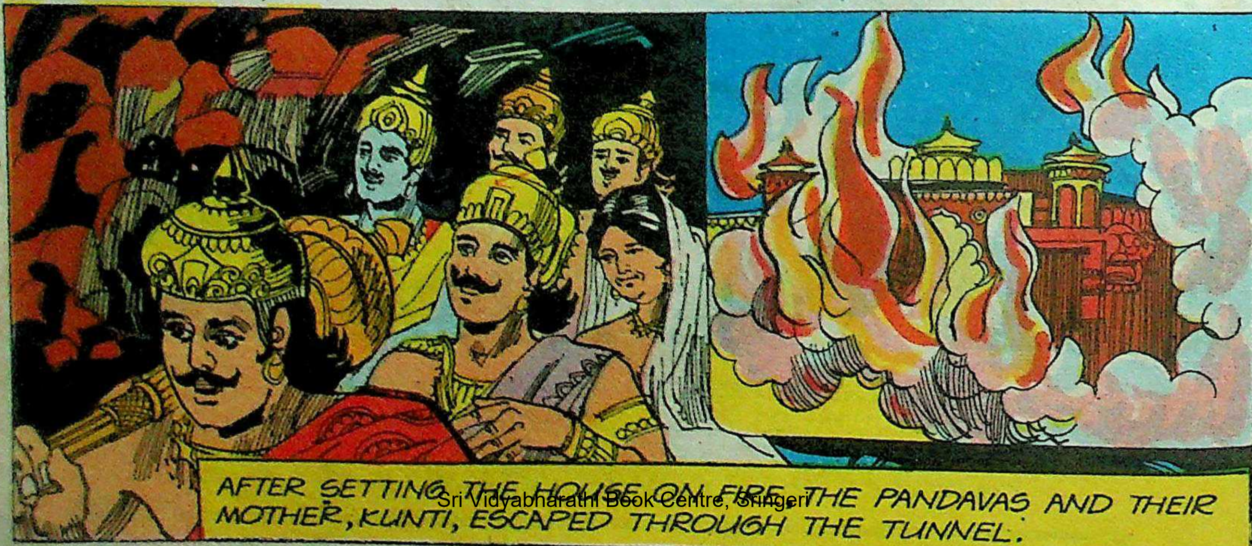
THE KAURAVA PRINCES AND THE ORPHANED PANDAVA PRINCES WERE COUSINS. THEY GREW UP TOGETHER AT HASTINAPURA IN THE CHARGE OF THEIR GRAND-UNCLE, BHEESHMA.

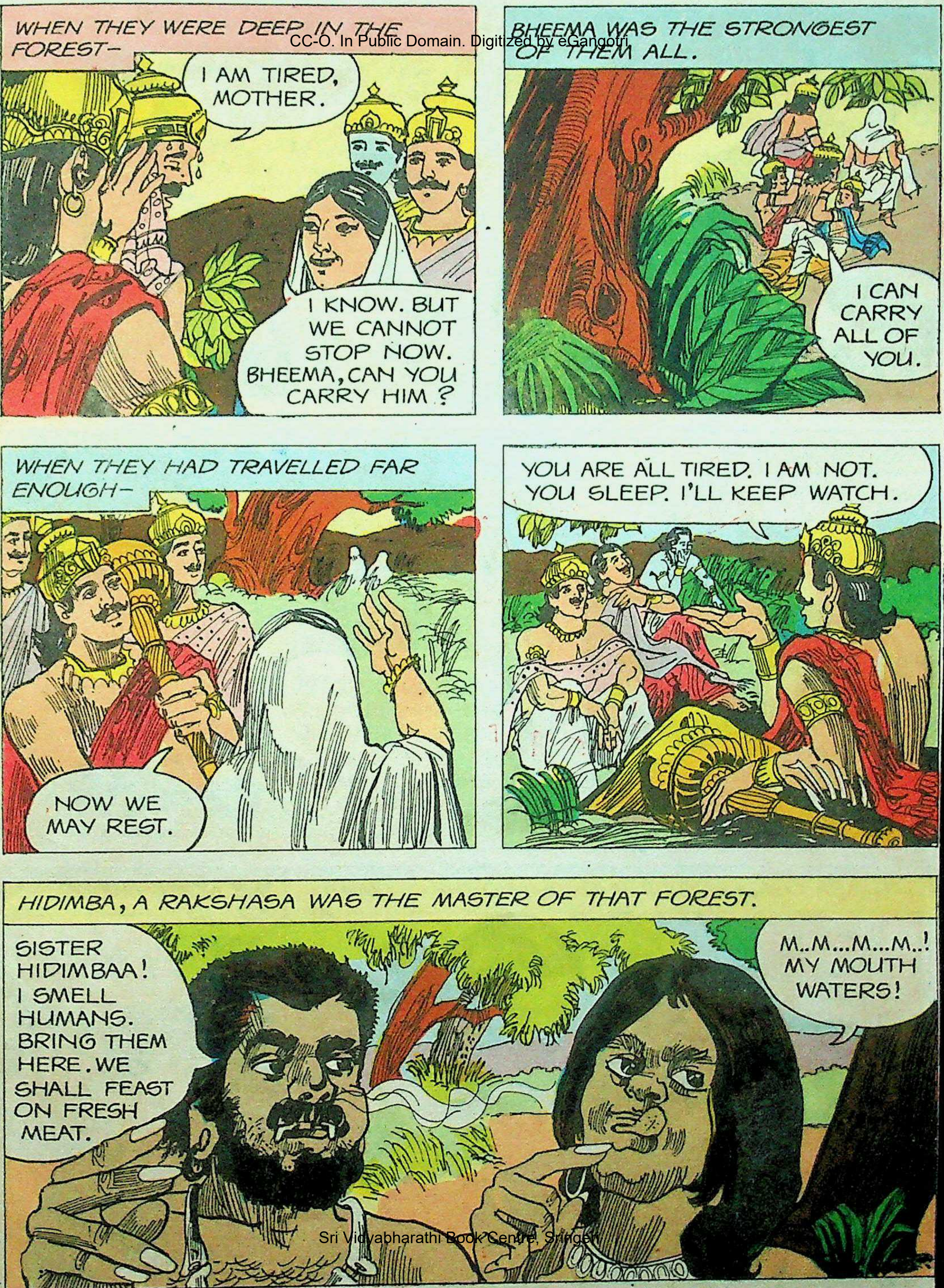

BUT THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR COUSINS.
UNCLE BHEESHMA IS PARTIAL TO THE PANDAVAS.
THE PEOPLE TOO LOVE THEM MORE THAN US.


JEALOUSY SOON TURNED INTO HATRED. DURYODHANA, THE ELDEST KAURAVA THOUGHT OF A WICKED PLAN.
WE WILL SEND THEM TO VARANAVATA TO LIVE IN THE HOUSE OF LAC. AND THEN SET FIRE TO IT.


WHEN THE PANDAVAS ARRIVED AT VARANAVATA, YUDHISHTHIRA, THE ELDEST OF THEM TURNED TO THE OTHERS—
THIS IS A TRAP!


THE PANDAVAS SECRETLY HAD A TUNNEL MADE FOR ESCAPE.
BEFORE WE LEAVE, WE MUST SET FIRE TO THIS HOUSE.


AFTER SETTING THE HOUSE ON FIRE, THE PANDAVAS AND THEIR MOTHER, KUNTI, ESCAPED THROUGH THE TUNNEL.


WHEN THEY WERE DEEP IN THE FOREST-
I AM TIRED, MOTHER.
I KNOW. BUT WE CANNOT STOP NOW. BHEEMA, CAN YOU CARRY HIM ?
BHEEMA WAS THE STRONGEST OF THEM ALL.
I CAN CARRY ALL OF YOU.
WHEN THEY HAD TRAVELLED FAR ENOUGH-
NOW WE MAY REST.
YOU ARE ALL TIRED. I AM NOT. YOU SLEEP. I'LL KEEP WATCH.
HIDIMBA, A RAKSHASA WAS THE MASTER OF THAT FOREST.
SISTER HIDIMBAA! I SMELL HUMANS. BRING THEM HERE. WE SHALL FEAST ON FRESH MEAT.
M..M...M...M..! MY MOUTH WATERS!

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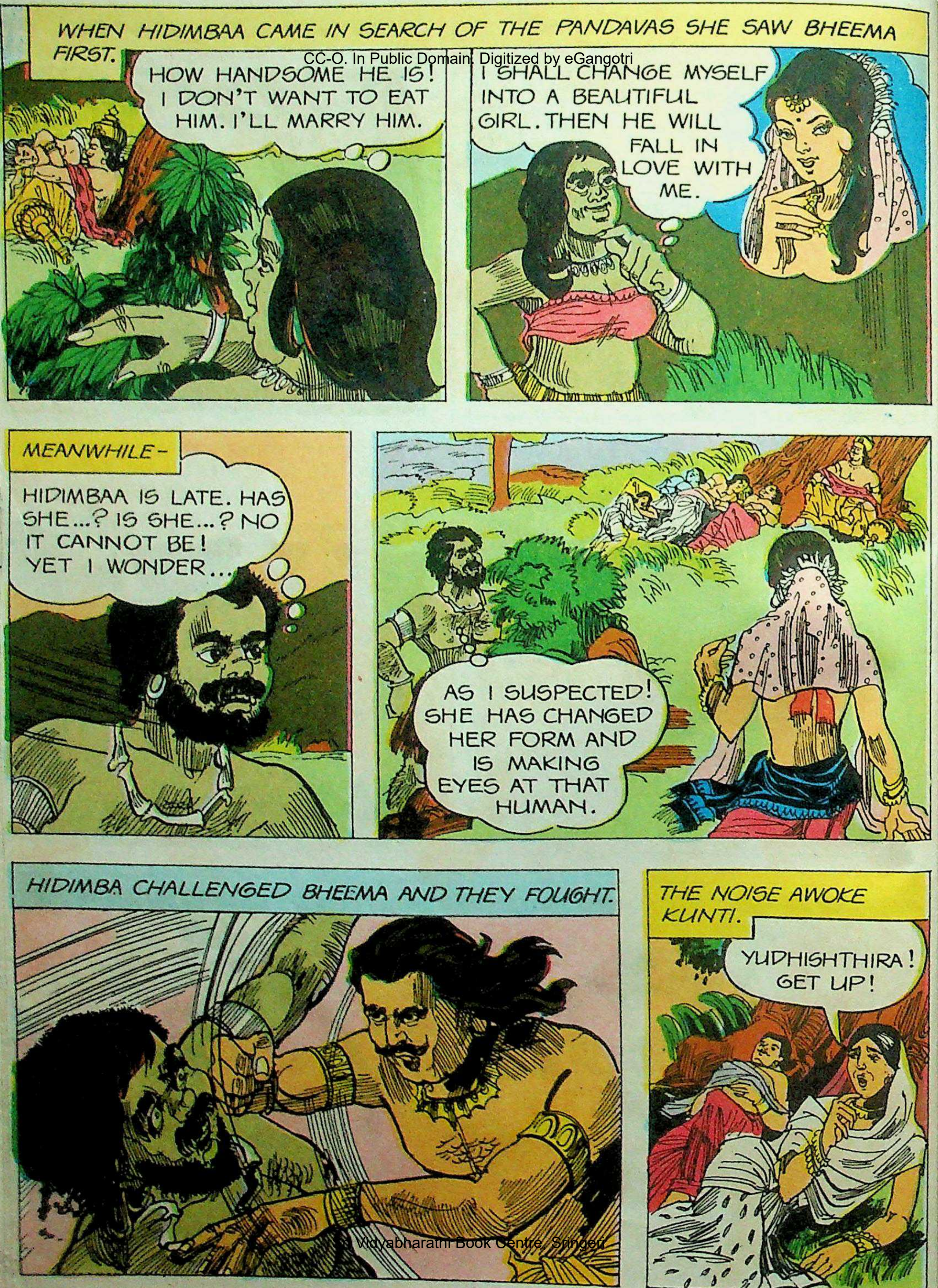
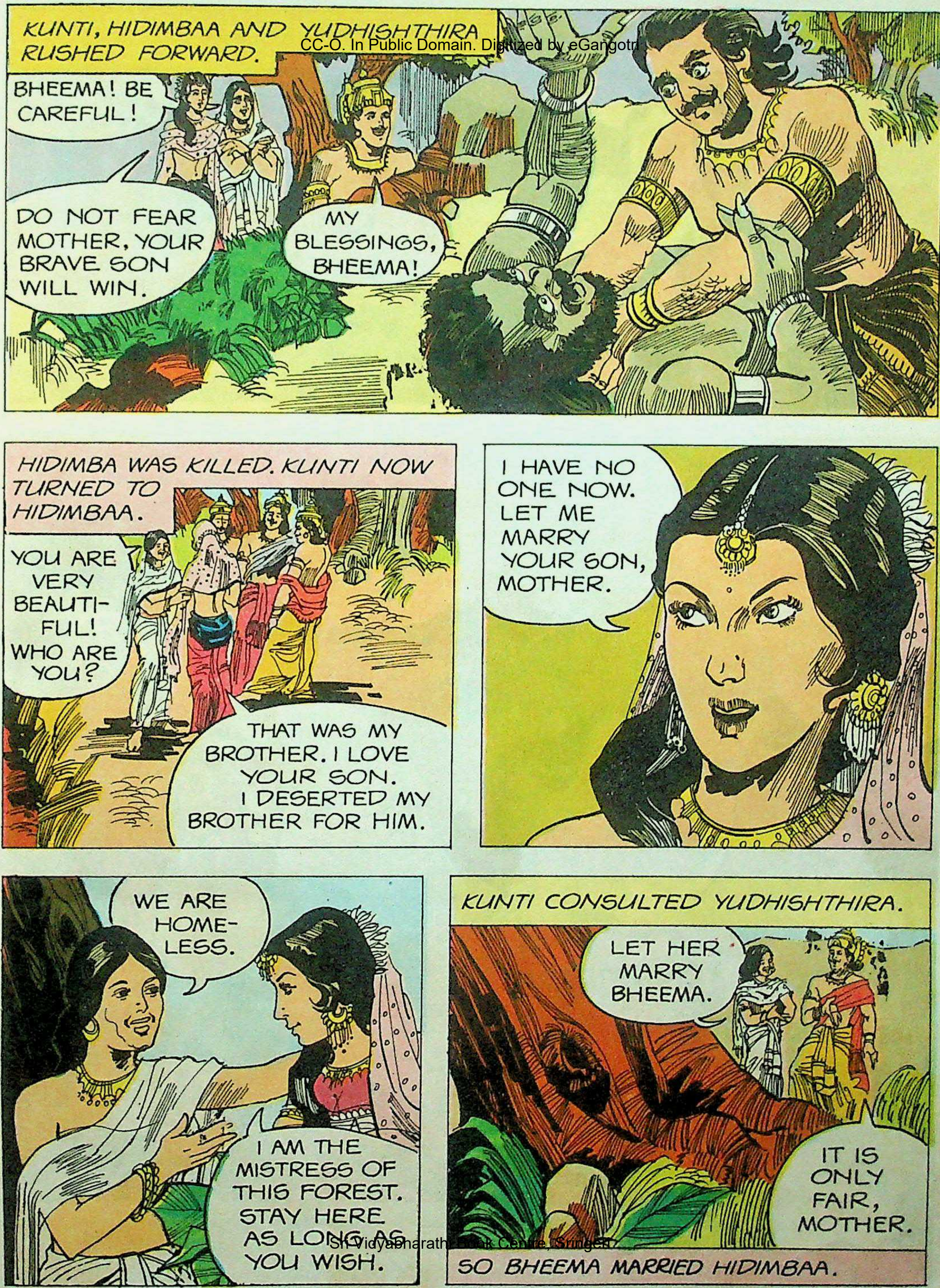
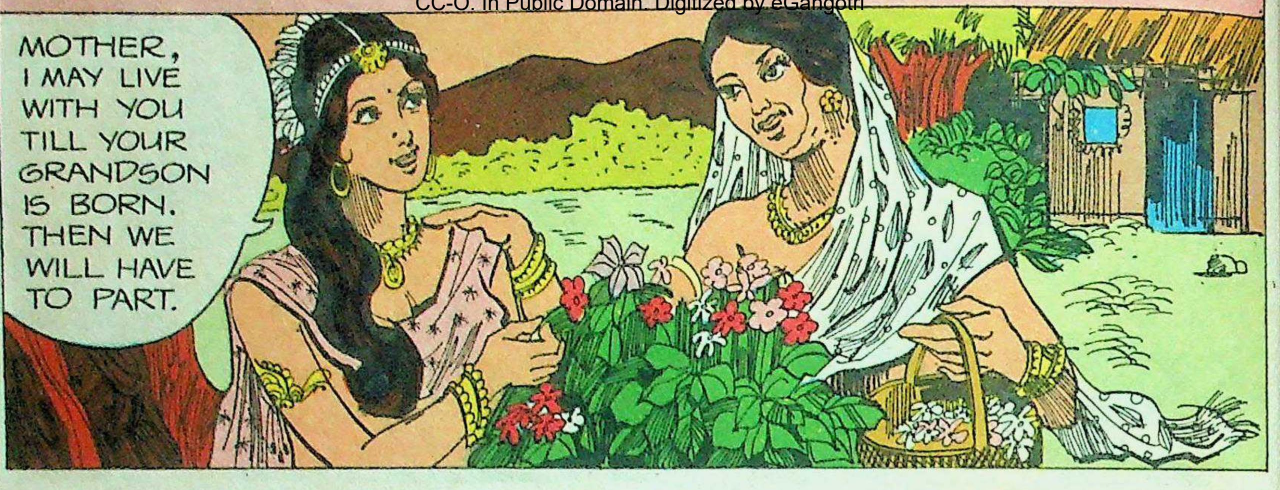
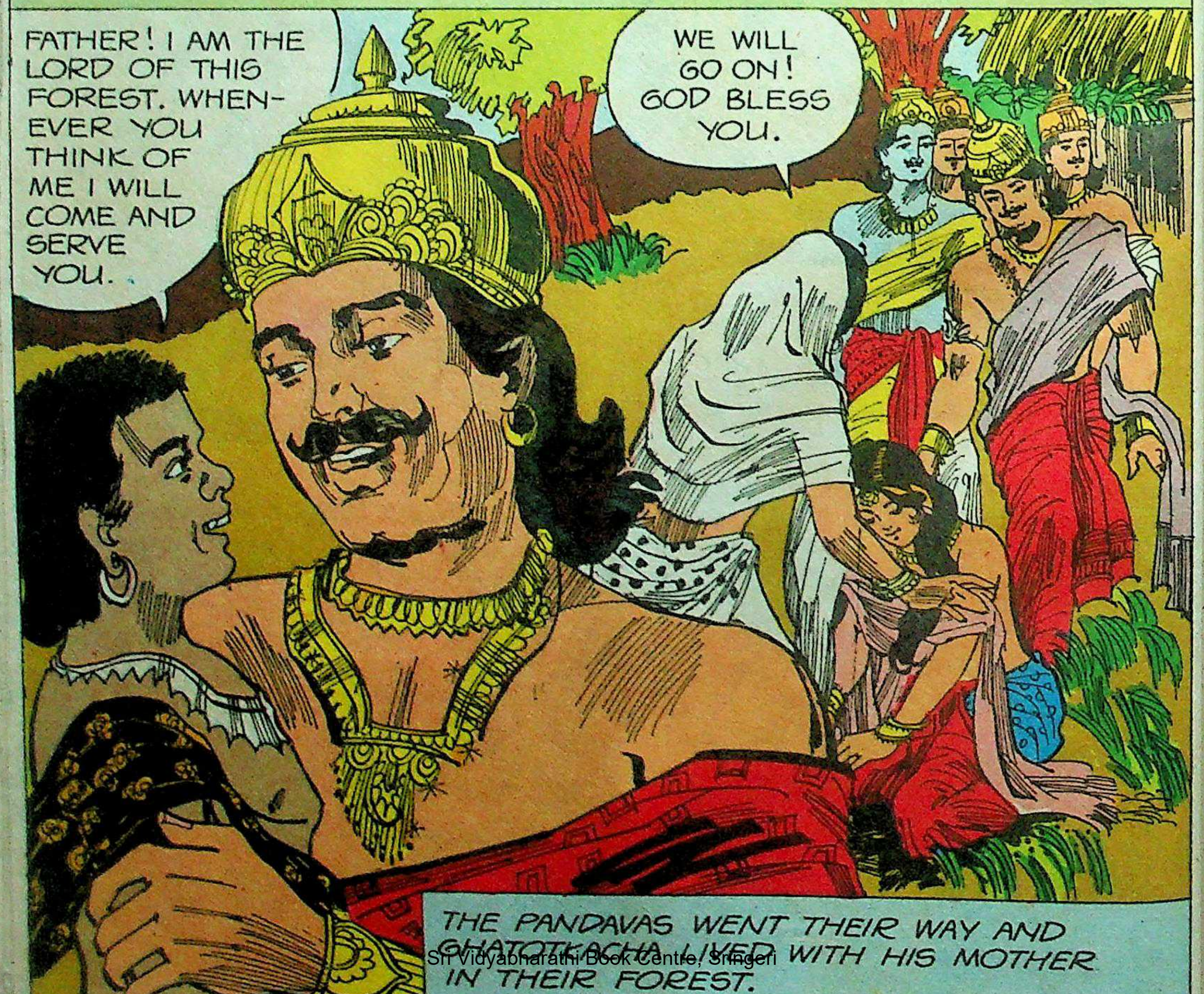

WHEN HIDIMBAA CAME IN SEARCH OF THE PANDAVAS SHE SAW BHEEMA FIRST.
HOW HANDSOME HE IS! I DON'T WANT TO EAT HIM. I'LL MARRY HIM.
I SHALL CHANGE MYSELF INTO A BEAUTIFUL GIRL. THEN HE WILL FALL IN LOVE WITH ME.
MEANWHILE -
HIDIMBAA IS LATE. HAS SHE...? IS SHE...? NO IT CANNOT BE! YET I WONDER...
AS I SUSPECTED! SHE HAS CHANGED HER FORM AND IS MAKING EYES AT THAT HUMAN.
HIDIMBA CHALLENGED BHEEMA AND THEY FOUGHT.
THE NOISE AWOKE KUNTI.
YUDHISHTHIRA! GET UP!


KUNTI, HIDIMBAA AND YUDHISHTHIRA RUSHED FORWARD.
BHEEMA! BE CAREFUL!
DO NOT FEAR MOTHER, YOUR BRAVE SON WILL WIN.
MY BLESSINGS, BHEEMA!
HIDIMBA WAS KILLED. KUNTI NOW TURNED TO HIDIMBAA.
YOU ARE VERY BEAUTIFUL! WHO ARE YOU?
THAT WAS MY BROTHER. I LOVE YOUR SON. I DESERTED MY BROTHER FOR HIM.
I HAVE NO ONE NOW. LET ME MARRY YOUR SON, MOTHER.
WE ARE HOMELESS.
I AM THE MISTRESS OF THIS FOREST. STAY HERE AS LONG AS YOU WISH.
KUNTI CONSULTED YUDHISHTHIRA.
LET HER MARRY BHEEMA.
IT IS ONLY FAIR, MOTHER.
SO BHEEMA MARRIED HIDIMBAA.

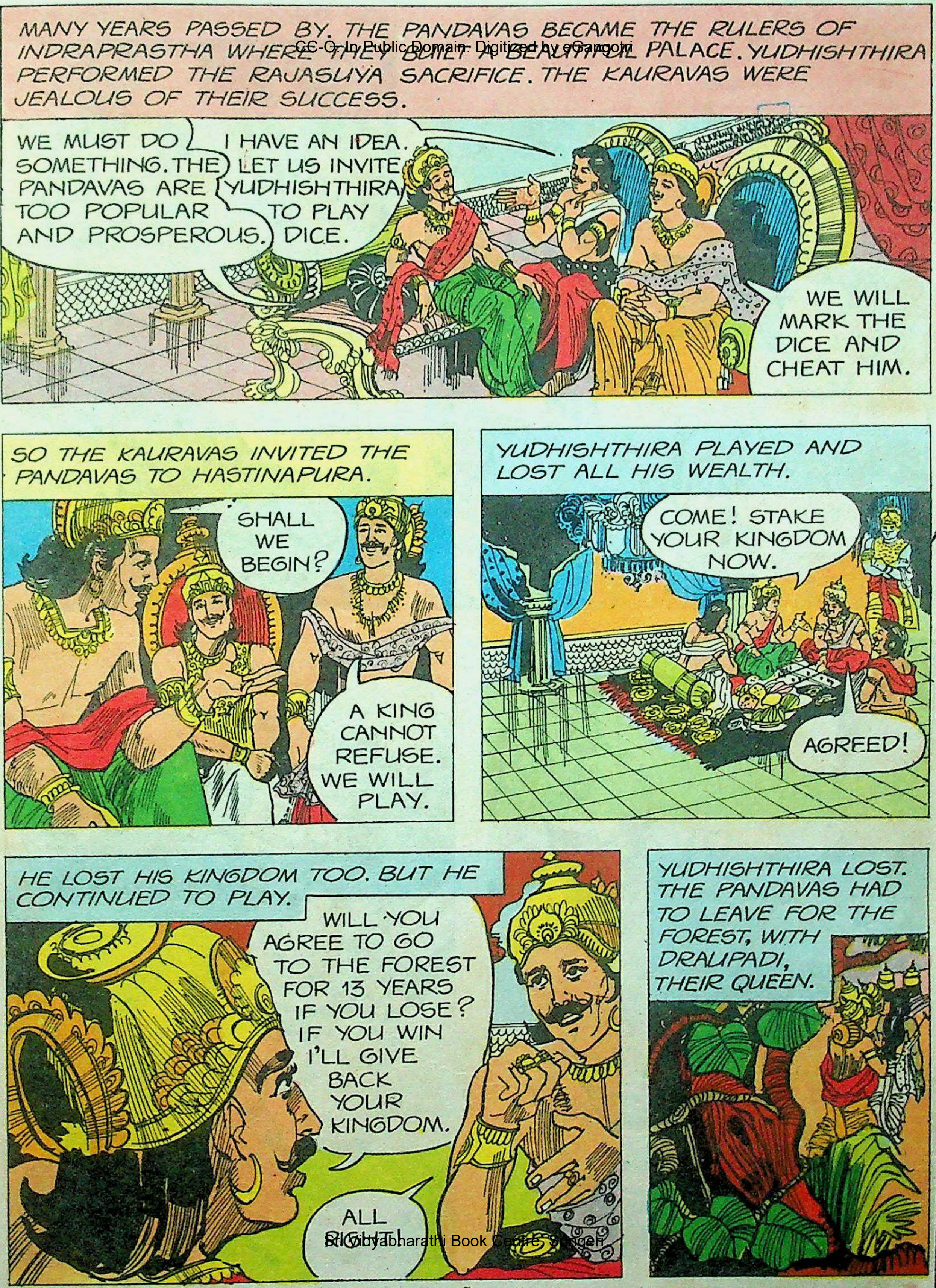
HIDIMBAA WAS A DEVOTED DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

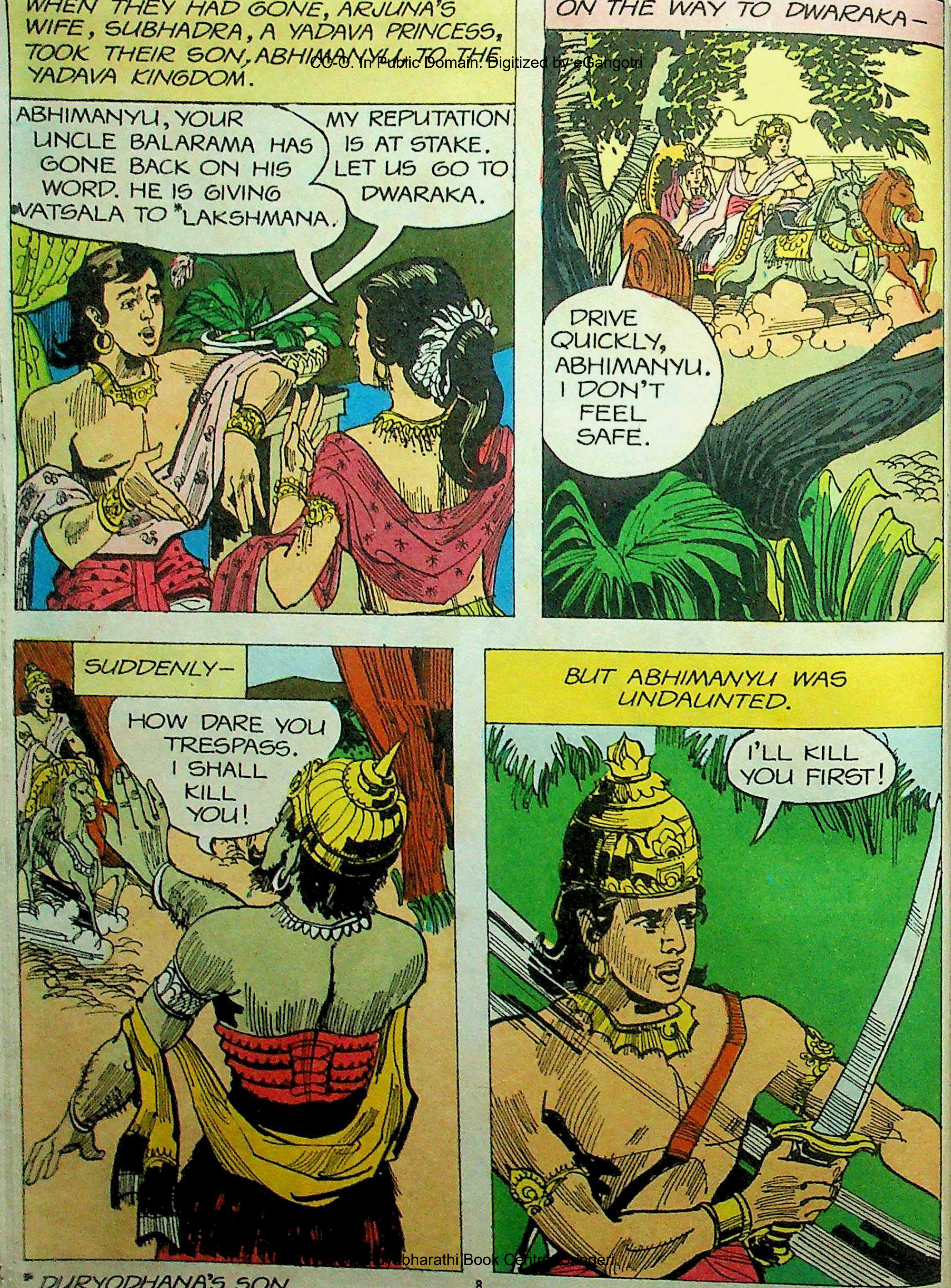

MOTHER, I MAY LIVE WITH YOU TILL YOUR GRANDSON IS BORN. THEN WE WILL HAVE TO PART.

NOT LONG AFTER, BHEEMA'S SON, GHATOTKACHA, WAS BORN. BEING A RAKSHASA HE KNEW ALL THEIR MAGIC AND WAS FULL-GROWN AT BIRTH.


FATHER! I AM THE LORD OF THIS FOREST. WHENEVER YOU THINK OF ME I WILL COME AND SERVE YOU.
WE WILL GO ON! GOD BLESS YOU.

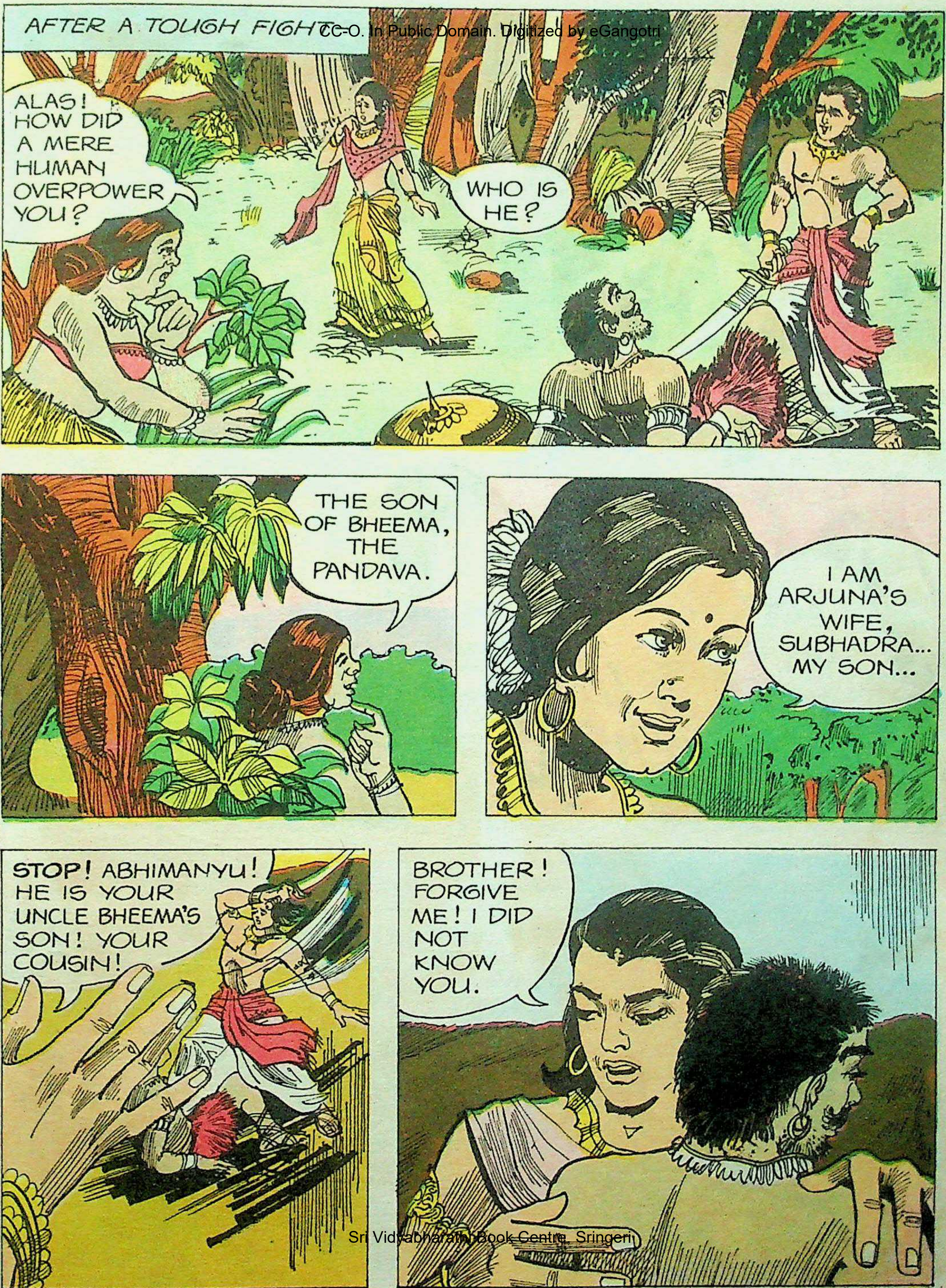
THE PANDAVAS WENT THEIR WAY AND GHATOTKACHA LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER IN THEIR FOREST.

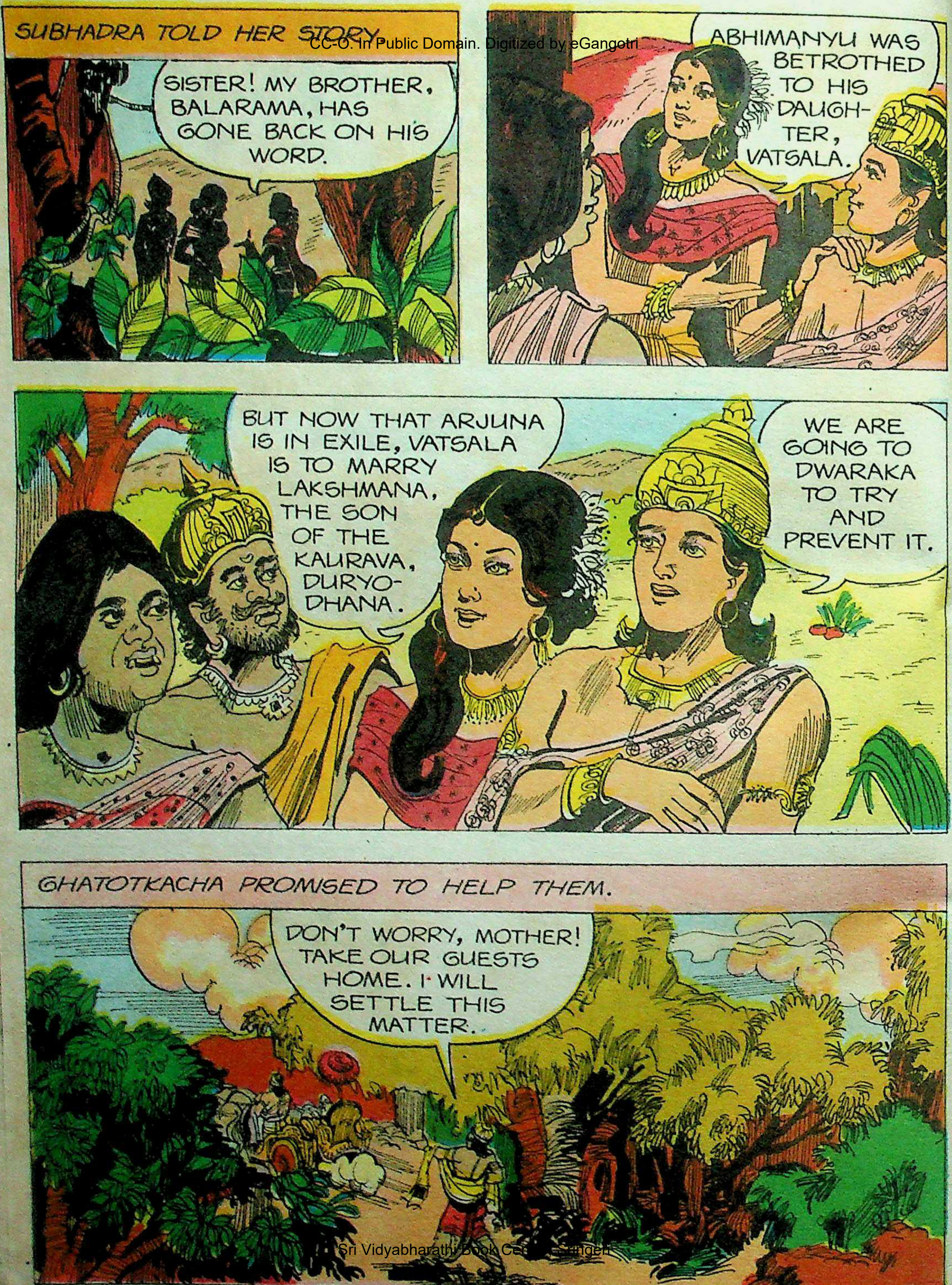

MANY YEARS PASSED BY. THE PANDAVAS BECAME THE RULERS OF INDRAPRASTHA WHERE THEY BUILT A BEAUTIFUL PALACE. YUDHISHTHIRA PERFORMED THE RAJASUYA SACRIFICE. THE KAURAVAS WERE JEALOUS OF THEIR SUCCESS.
WE MUST DO SOMETHING. THE PANDAVAS ARE TOO POPULAR AND PROSPEROUS.
I HAVE AN IDEA. LET US INVITE YUDHISHTHIRA TO PLAY DICE.
WE WILL MARK THE DICE AND CHEAT HIM.
SO THE KAURAVAS INVITED THE PANDAVAS TO HASTINAPURA.
SHALL WE BEGIN?
A KING CANNOT REFUSE. WE WILL PLAY.
YUDHISHTHIRA PLAYED AND LOST ALL HIS WEALTH.
COME! STAKE YOUR KINGDOM NOW.
AGREED!
HE LOST HIS KINGDOM TOO. BUT HE CONTINUED TO PLAY.
WILL YOU AGREE TO GO TO THE FOREST FOR 13 YEARS IF YOU LOSE? IF YOU WIN I'LL GIVE BACK YOUR KINGDOM.
ALL RIGHT!
YUDHISHTHIRA LOST. THE PANDAVAS HAD TO LEAVE FOR THE FOREST, WITH DRAUPADI, THEIR QUEEN.

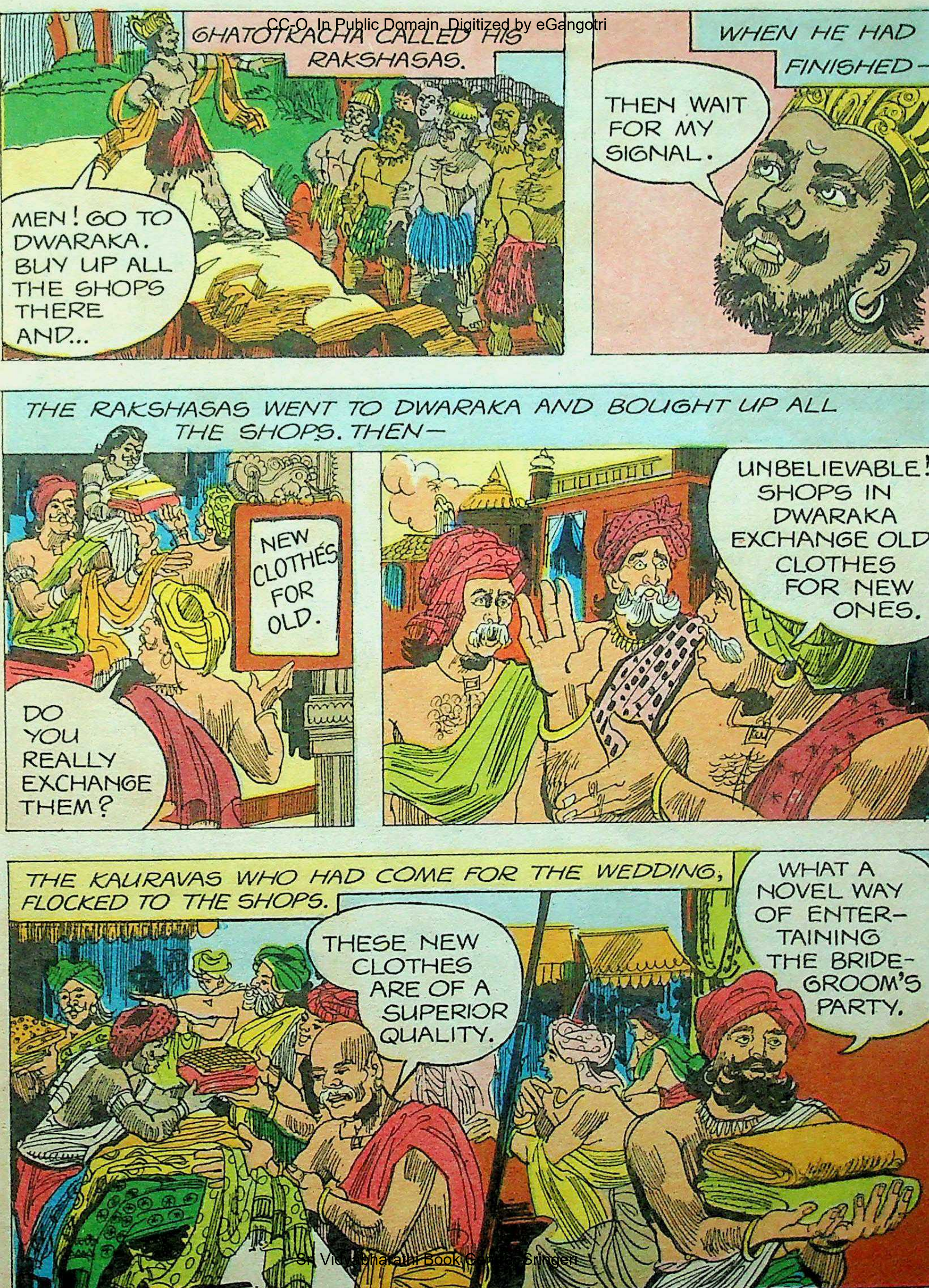

WHEN THEY HAD GONE, ARJUNA'S WIFE, SUBHADRA, A YADAVA PRINCESS, TOOK THEIR SON, ABHIMANYU TO THE YADAVA KINGDOM.
ABHIMANYU, YOUR UNCLE BALARAMA HAS GONE BACK ON HIS WORD. HE IS GIVING •VATSALA TO *LAKSHMANA.
MY REPUTATION IS AT STAKE. LET US GO TO DWARAKA.
ON THE WAY TO DWARAKA—
DRIVE QUICKLY, ABHIMANYU. I DON'T FEEL SAFE.
SUDDENLY—
HOW DARE YOU TRESPASS. I SHALL KILL YOU!
BUT ABHIMANYU WAS UNDAUNTED.
I'LL KILL YOU FIRST!

* DURYODHANA'S SON.

•BALARAMA'S DAUGHTER


AFTER A TOUGH FIGHT
ALAS! HOW DID A MERE HUMAN OVERPOWER YOU?
WHO IS HE?
THE SON OF BHEEMA, THE PANDAVA.
I AM ARJUNA'S WIFE, SUBHADRA... MY SON...
STOP! ABHIMANYU! HE IS YOUR UNCLE BHEEMA'S SON! YOUR COUSIN!
BROTHER! FORGIVE ME! I DID NOT KNOW YOU.


SUBHADRA TOLD HER STORY.
SISTER! MY BROTHER, BALARAMA, HAS GONE BACK ON HIS WORD.
ABHIMANYU WAS BETROTHED TO HIS DAUGHTER, VATSALA.
BUT NOW THAT ARJUNA IS IN EXILE, VATSALA IS TO MARRY LAKSHMANA, THE SON OF THE KAURAVA, DURYODHANA.
WE ARE GOING TO DWARAKA TO TRY AND PREVENT IT.
GHATOTKACHA PROMISED TO HELP THEM.
DON'T WORRY, MOTHER! TAKE OUR GUESTS HOME. I WILL SETTLE THIS MATTER.


GHATOTKACHA CALLED HIS RAKSHASAS.
MEN! GO TO DWARAKA. BUY UP ALL THE SHOPS THERE AND...
WHEN HE HAD FINISHED—
THEN WAIT FOR MY SIGNAL.
THE RAKSHASAS WENT TO DWARAKA AND BOUGHT UP ALL THE SHOPS. THEN—
NEW CLOTHES FOR OLD.
DO YOU REALLY EXCHANGE THEM?
UNBELIEVABLE! SHOPS IN DWARAKA EXCHANGE OLD CLOTHES FOR NEW ONES.
THE KAURAVAS WHO HAD COME FOR THE WEDDING, FLOCKED TO THE SHOPS.
THESE NEW CLOTHES ARE OF A SUPERIOR QUALITY.
WHAT A NOVEL WAY OF ENTERTAINING THE BRIDEGROOM'S PARTY.

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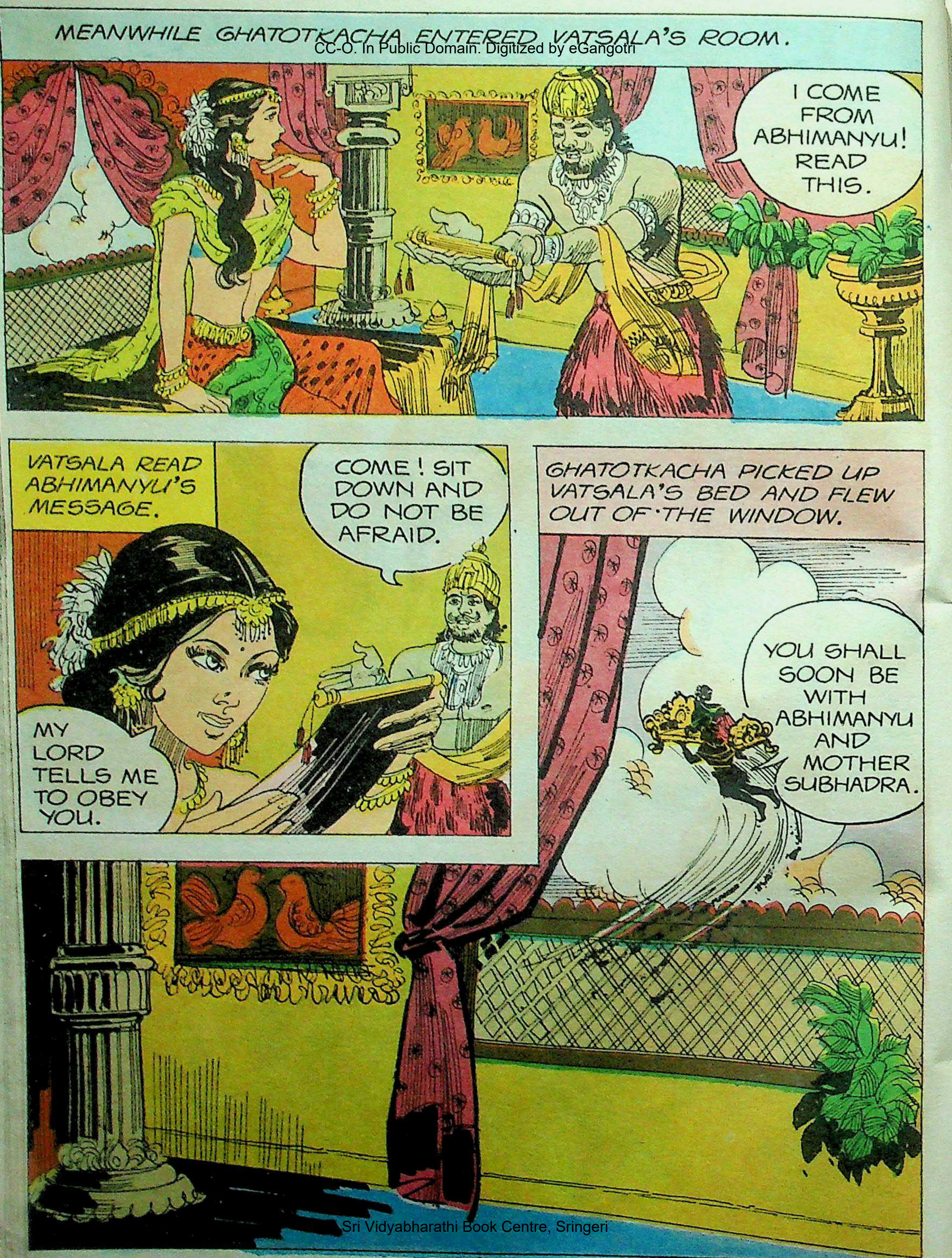
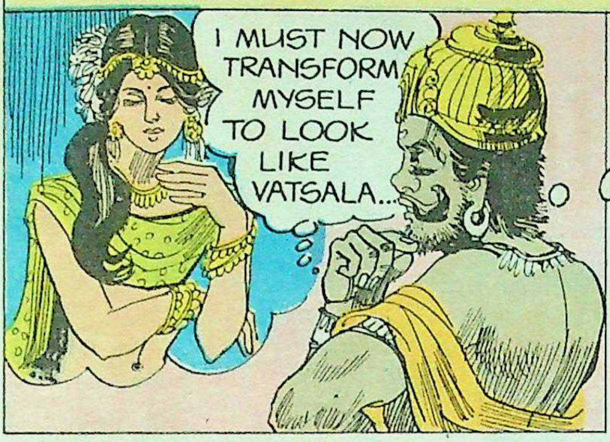
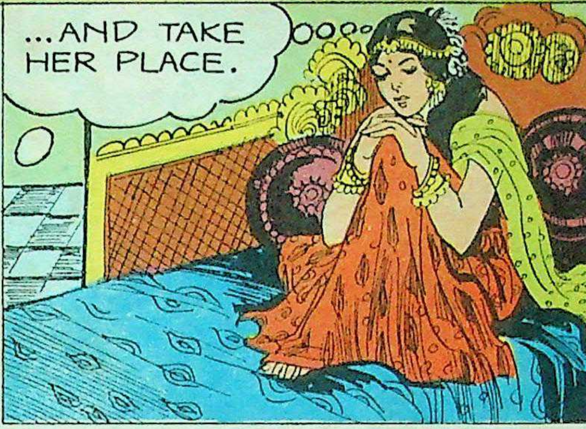
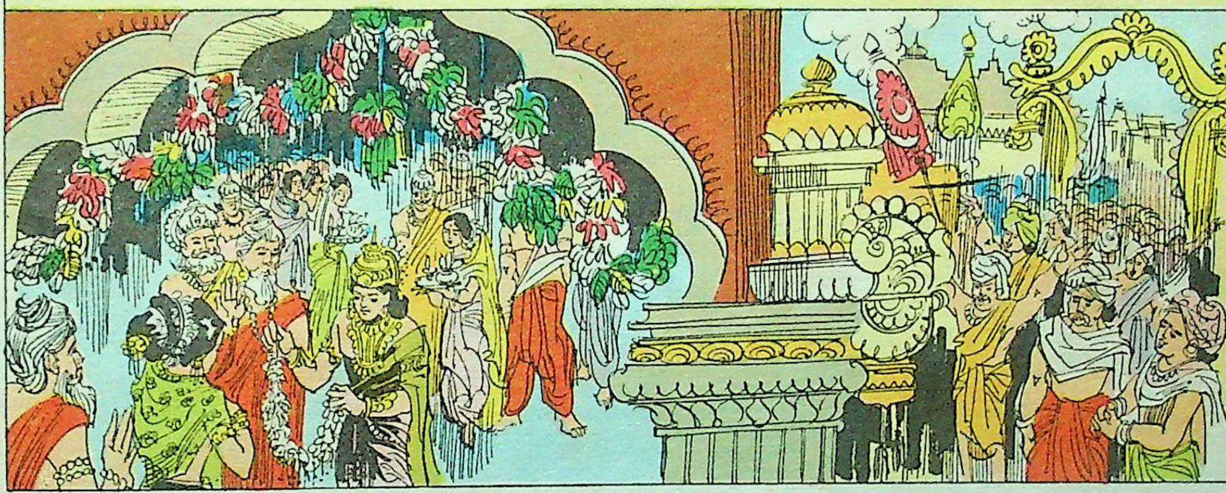

MEANWHILE GHATOTKACHA ENTERED VATSALA'S ROOM.
I COME FROM ABHIMANYU! READ THIS.
VATSALA READ ABHIMANYU'S MESSAGE.
COME! SIT DOWN AND DO NOT BE AFRAID.
MY LORD TELLS ME TO OBEY YOU.
GHATOTKACHA PICKED UP VATSALA'S BED AND FLEW OUT OF THE WINDOW.
YOU SHALL SOON BE WITH ABHIMANYU AND MOTHER SUBHADRA.

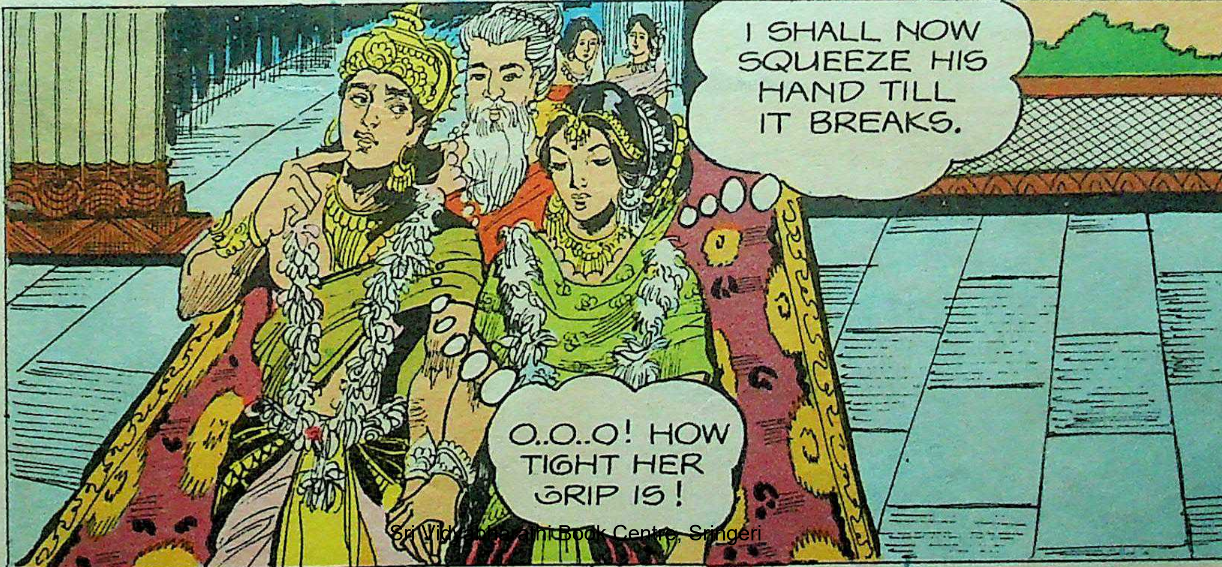
GHATOTKACHA LEFT VATSALA WITH ABHIMANYU AND RETURNED TO DWARAKA.

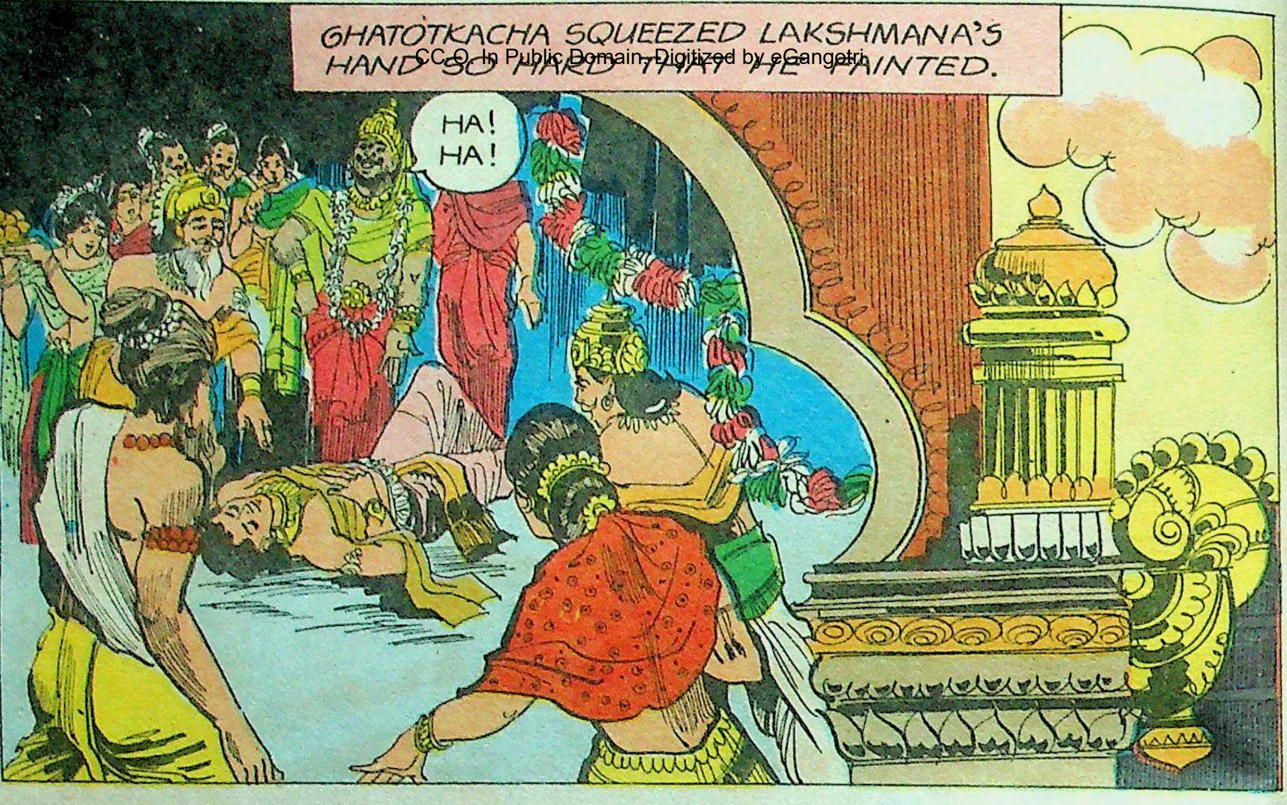

I MUST NOW TRANSFORM MYSELF TO LOOK LIKE VATSALA...

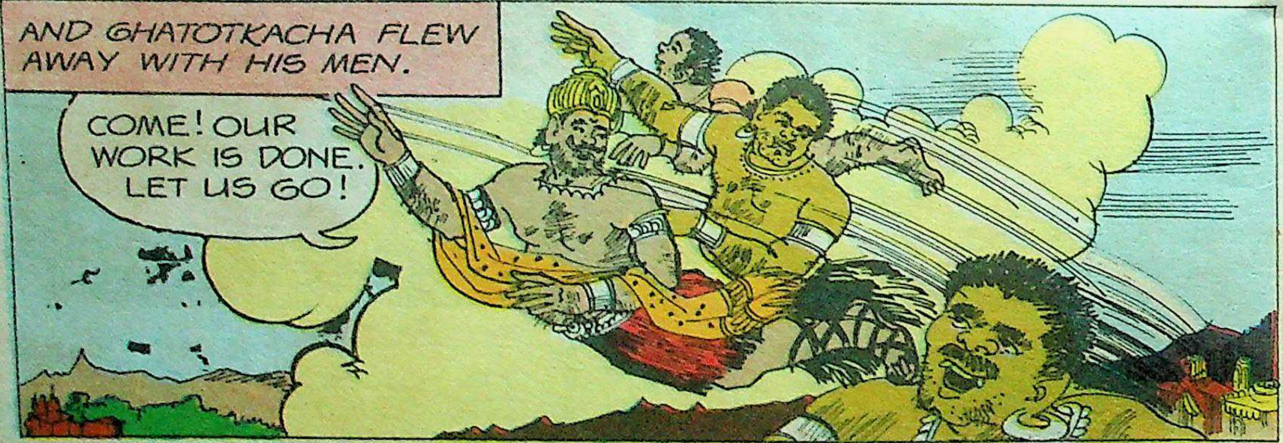

...AND TAKE HER PLACE.

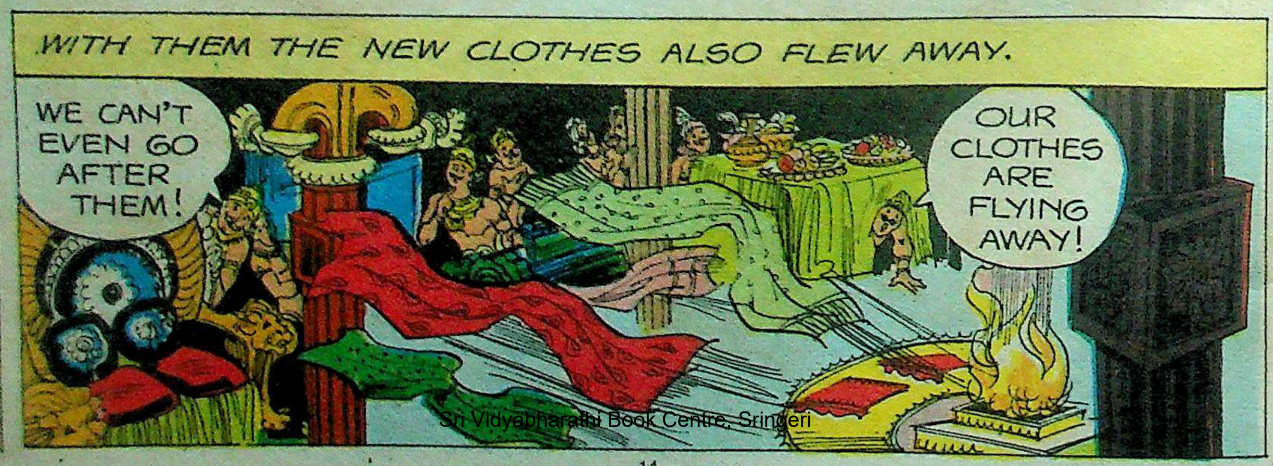
THE NEXT MORNING THE BRIDE WAS LED TO THE MARRIAGE HALL.

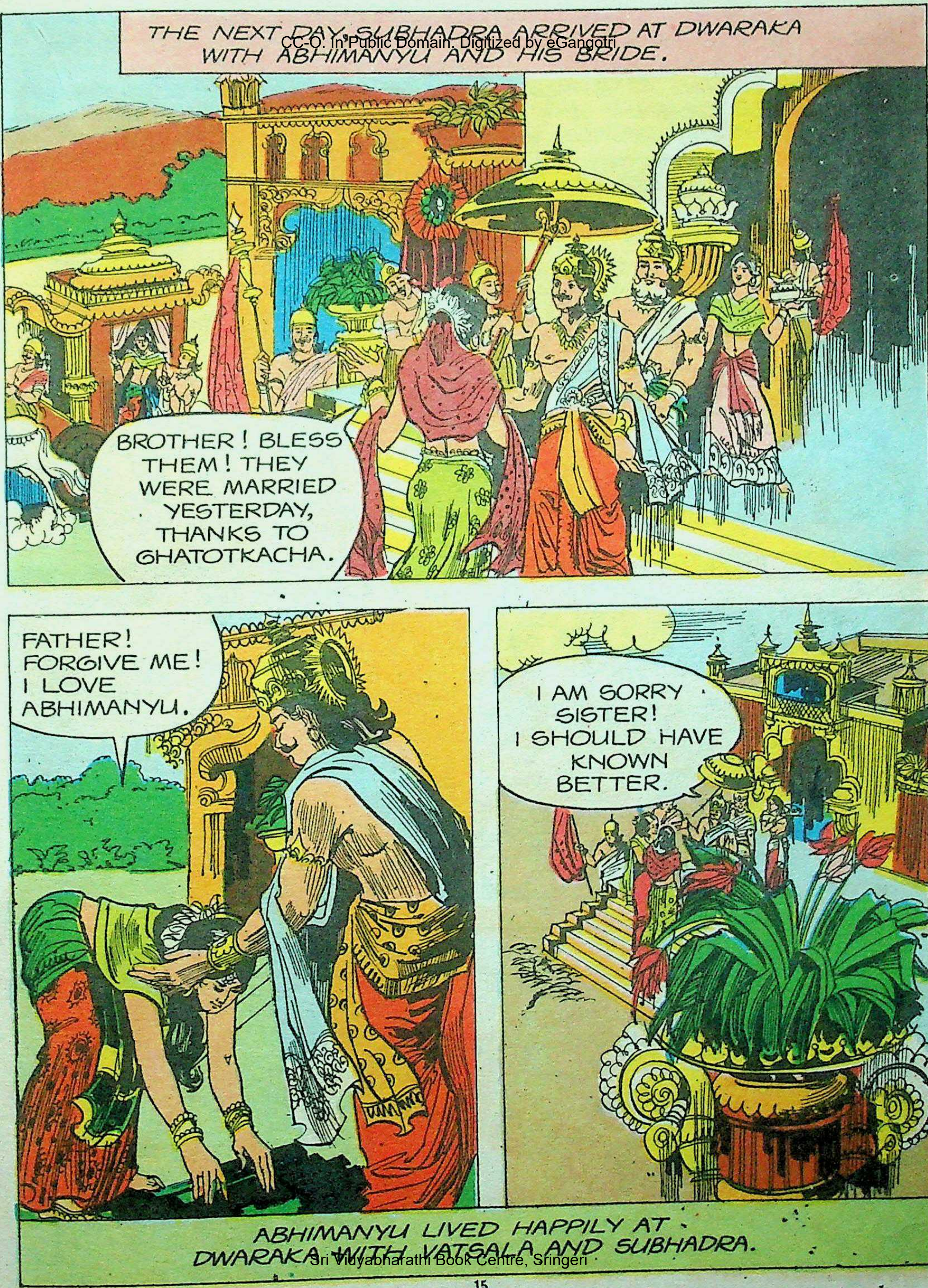


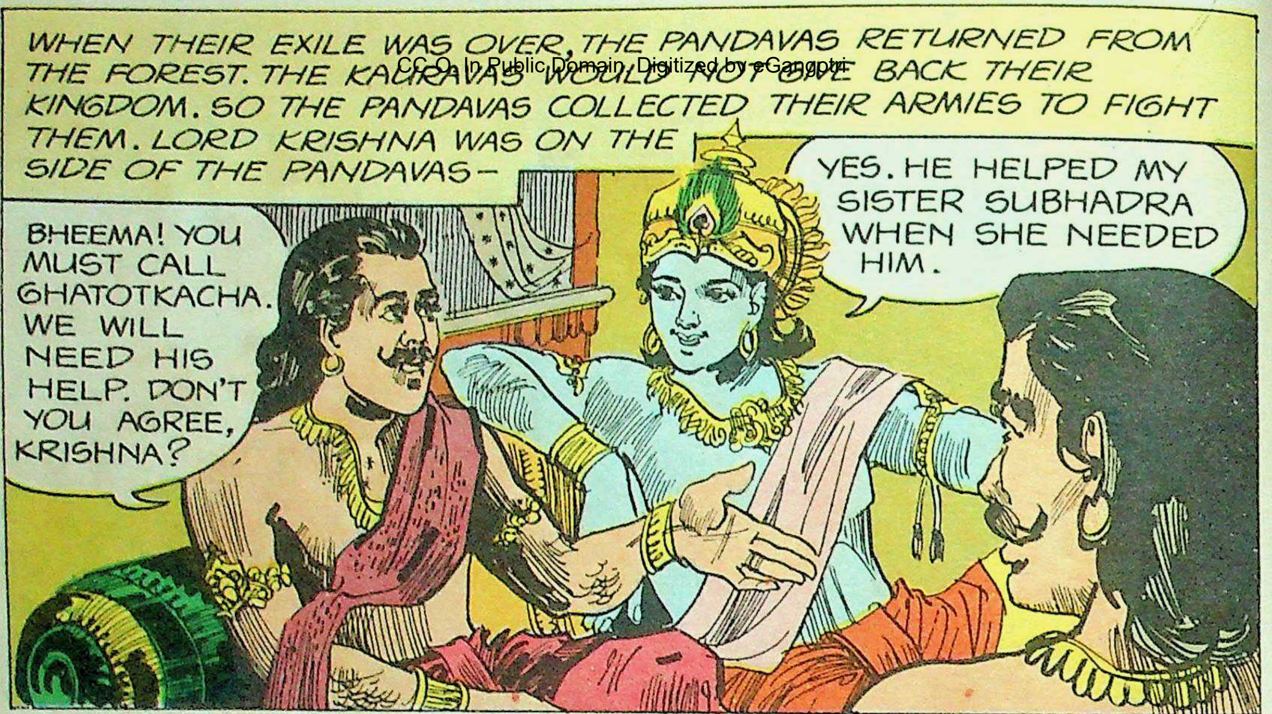

I SHALL NOW SQUEEZE HIS HAND TILL IT BREAKS.
O.O..O! HOW TIGHT HER GRIP IS!

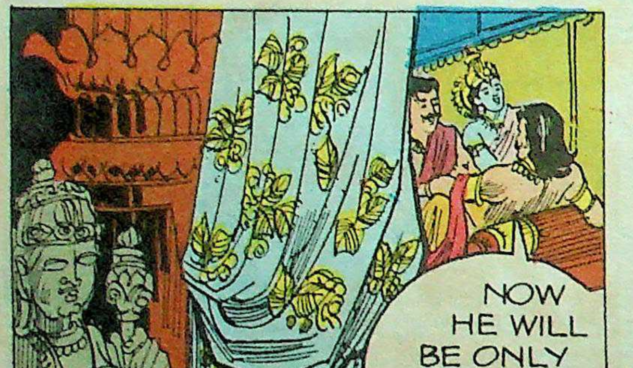

GHATOTKACHA SQUEEZED LAKSHMANA'S HAND SO HARD THAT HE FAINTED.
HA! HA!

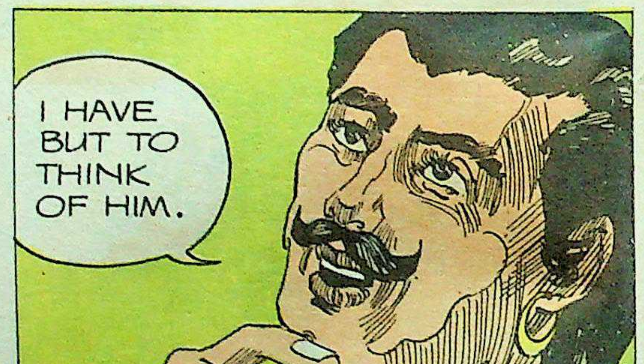

AND GHATOTKACHA FLEW AWAY WITH HIS MEN.
COME! OUR WORK IS DONE. LET US GO!

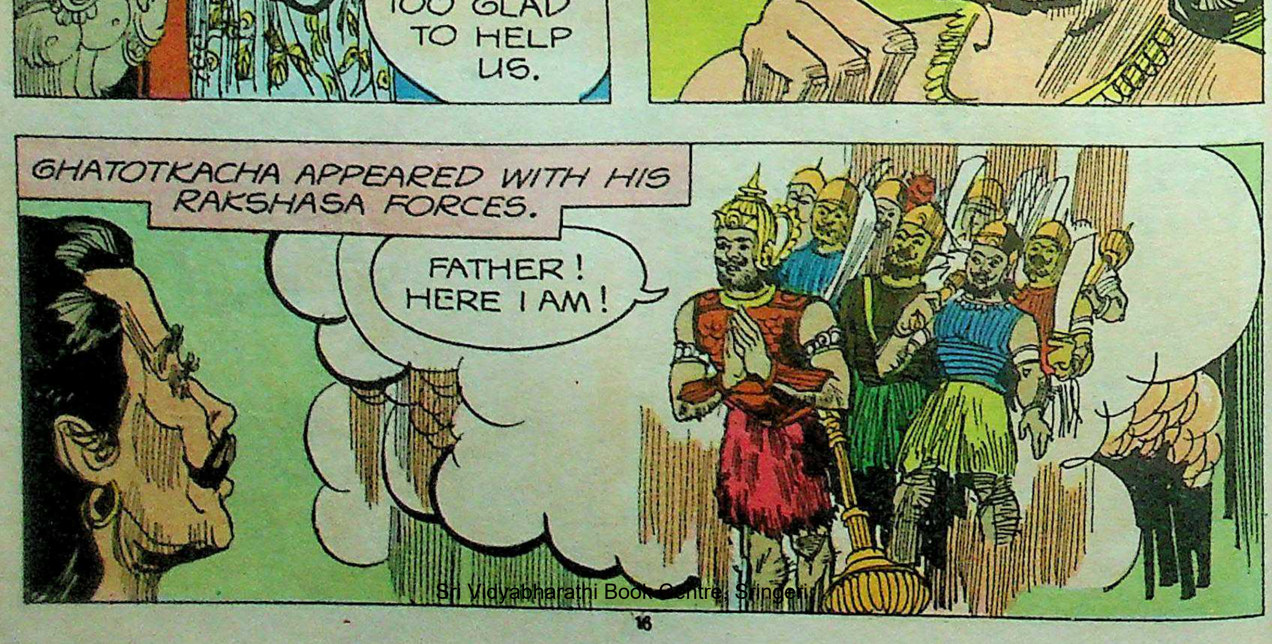

WITH THEM THE NEW CLOTHES ALSO FLEW AWAY.
WE CAN'T EVEN GO AFTER THEM!
OUR CLOTHES ARE FLYING AWAY!

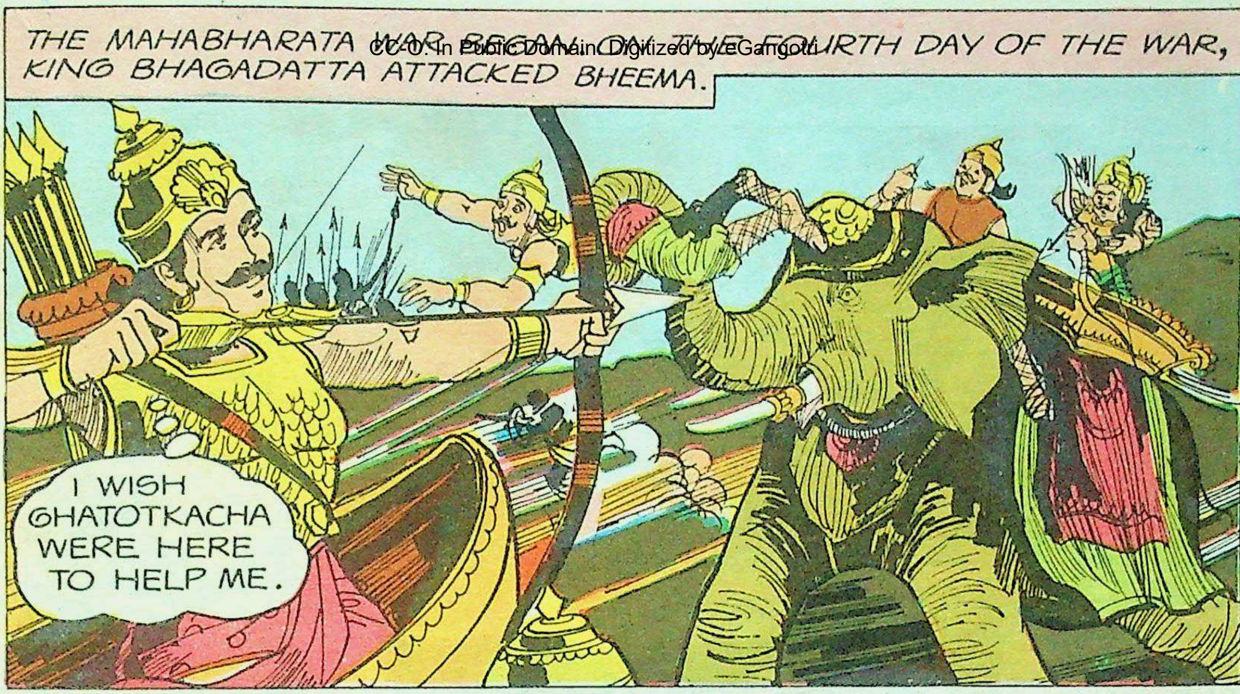

THE NEXT DAY, SUBHADRA ARRIVED AT DWARAKA WITH ABHIMANYU AND HIS BRIDE.
BROTHER! BLESS THEM! THEY WERE MARRIED YESTERDAY, THANKS TO GHATOTKACHA.
FATHER! FORGIVE ME! I LOVE ABHIMANYU.
I AM SORRY SISTER! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER.
ABHIMANYU LIVED HAPPILY AT DWARAKA WITH VATSALA AND SUBHADRA.

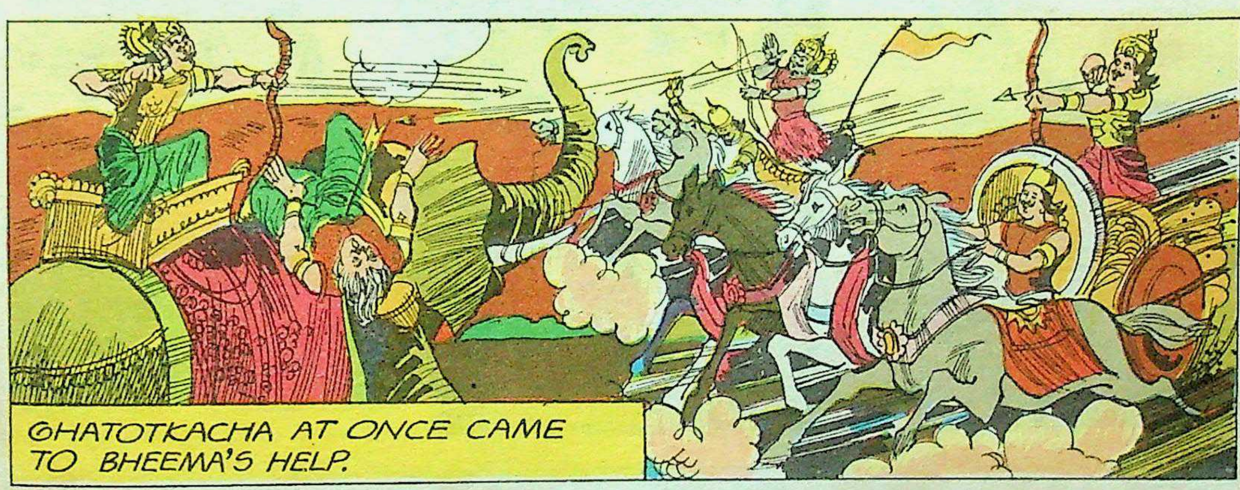

WHEN THEIR EXILE WAS OVER, THE PANDAVAS RETURNED FROM THE FOREST. THE KAURAVAS WOULD NOT GIVE BACK THEIR KINGDOM. SO THE PANDAVAS COLLECTED THEIR ARMIES TO FIGHT THEM. LORD KRISHNA WAS ON THE SIDE OF THE PANDAVAS—
BHEEMA! YOU MUST CALL GHATOTKACHA. WE WILL NEED HIS HELP. DON'T YOU AGREE, KRISHNA?
YES. HE HELPED MY SISTER SUBHADRA WHEN SHE NEEDED HIM.

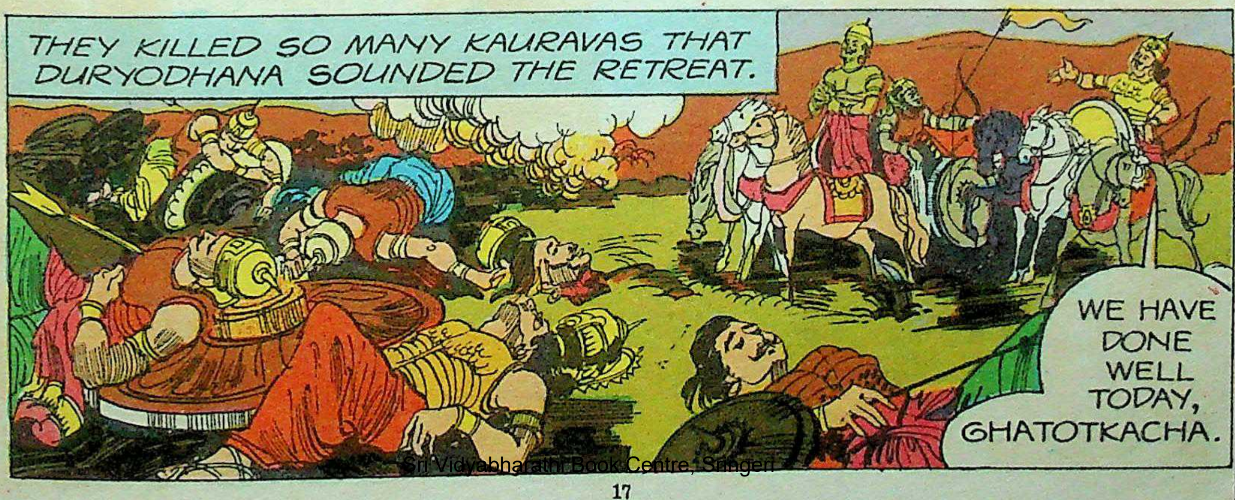

NOW HE WILL BE ONLY TOO GLAD TO HELP US.

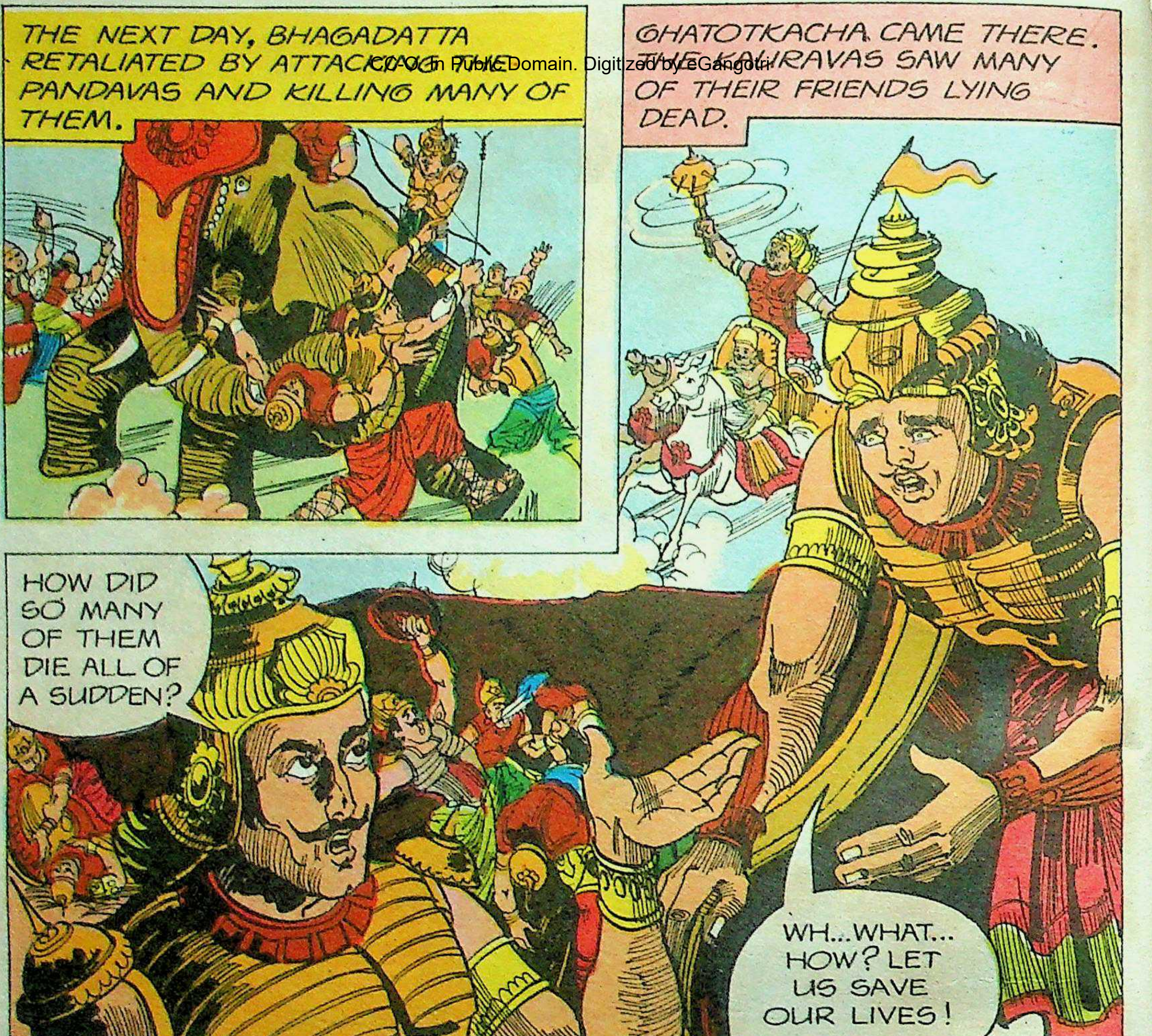

I HAVE BUT TO THINK OF HIM.


GHATOTKACHA APPEARED WITH HIS RAKSHASA FORCES.
FATHER! HERE I AM!


THE MAHABHARATA WAR BEGAN. ON THE FOURTH DAY OF THE WAR, KING BHAGADATTA ATTACKED BHEEMA.
I WISH GHATOTKACHA WERE HERE TO HELP ME.


GHATOTKACHA AT ONCE CAME TO BHEEMA'S HELP.

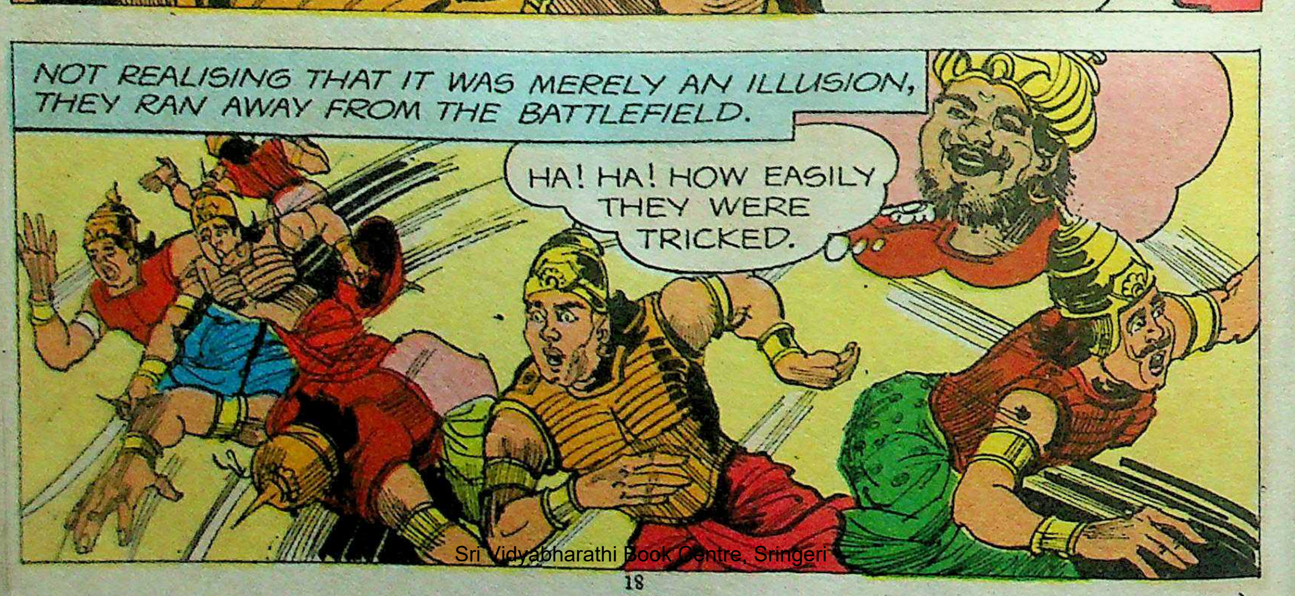

THEY KILLED SO MANY KAURAVAS THAT DURYODHANA SOUNDED THE RETREAT.
WE HAVE DONE WELL TODAY, GHATOTKACHA.



THE NEXT DAY, BHAGADATTA RETALIATED BY ATTACKING THE PANDAVAS AND KILLING MANY OF THEM.

GHATOTKACHA CAME THERE. THE KAURAVAS SAW MANY OF THEIR FRIENDS LYING DEAD.

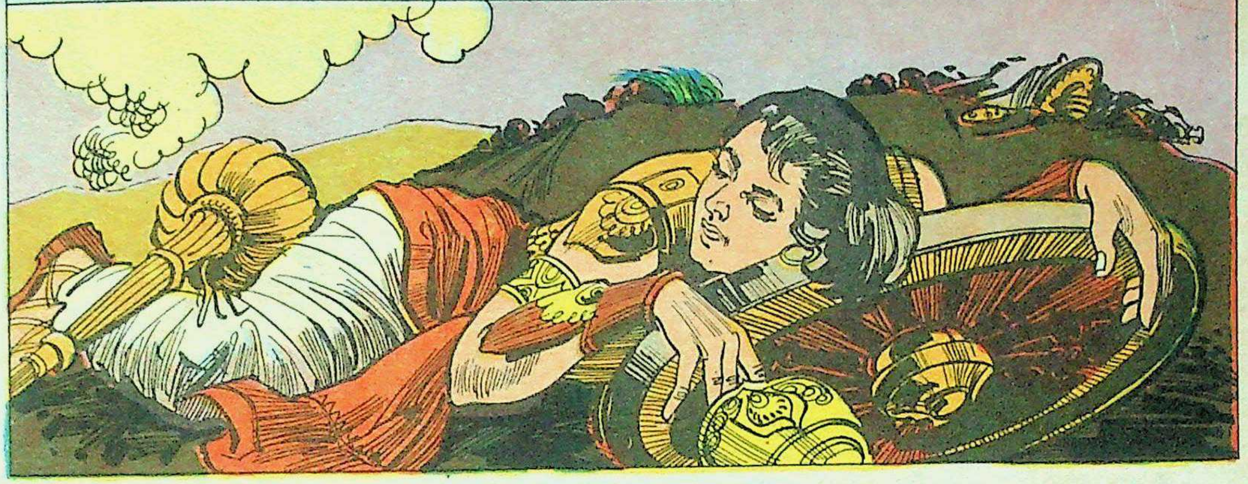
HOW DID SO MANY OF THEM DIE ALL OF A SUDDEN?
WH...WHAT... HOW? LET US SAVE OUR LIVES!



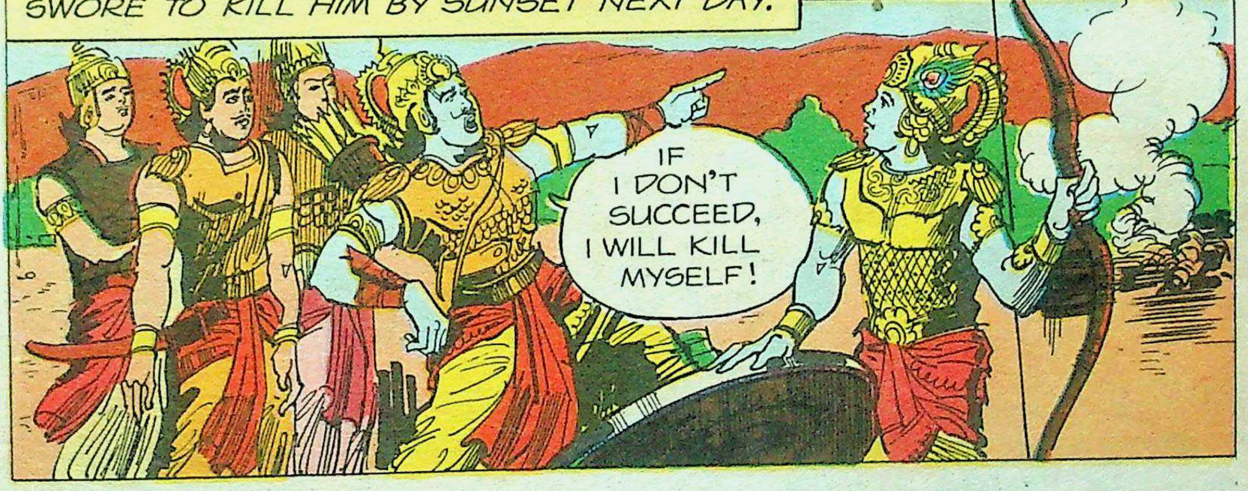
NOT REALISING THAT IT WAS MERELY AN ILLUSION, THEY RAN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.

HA! HA! HOW EASILY THEY WERE TRICKED.

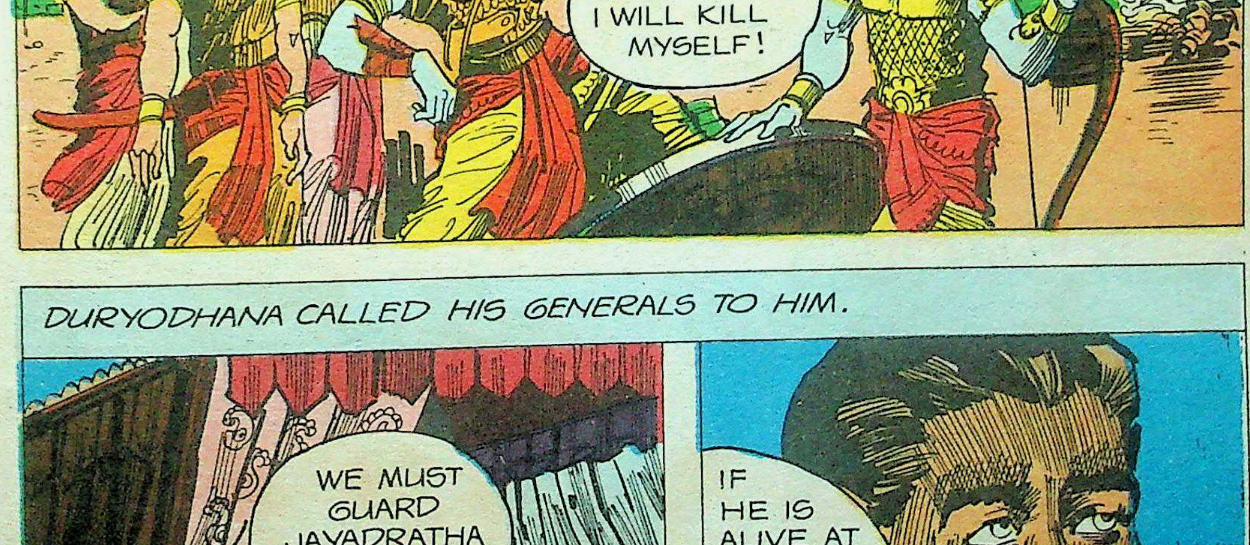
ON THE THIRTEENTH DAY OF THE WAR ABHIMANYU WAS KILLED.

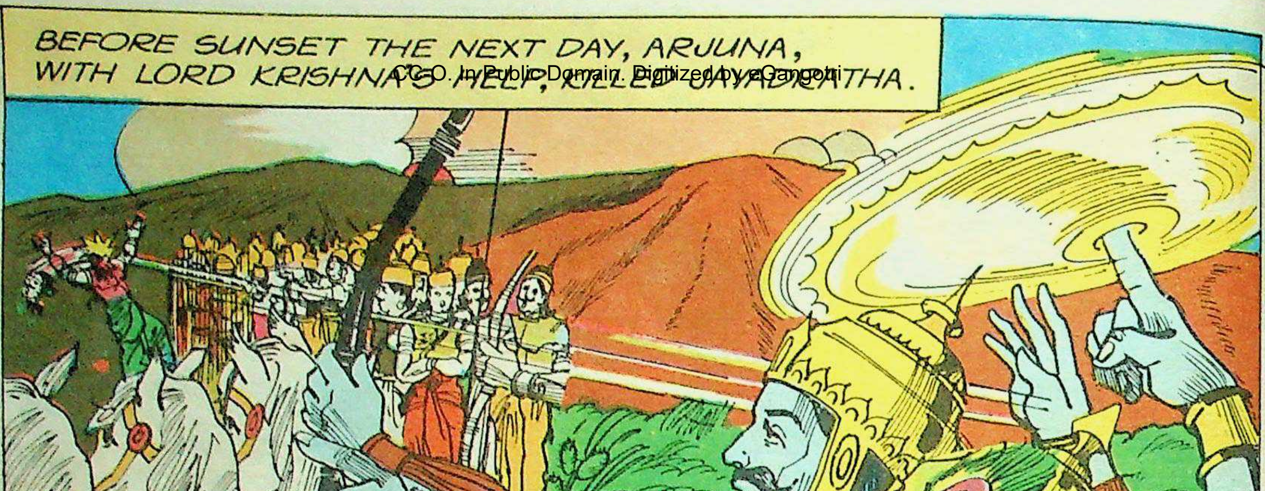


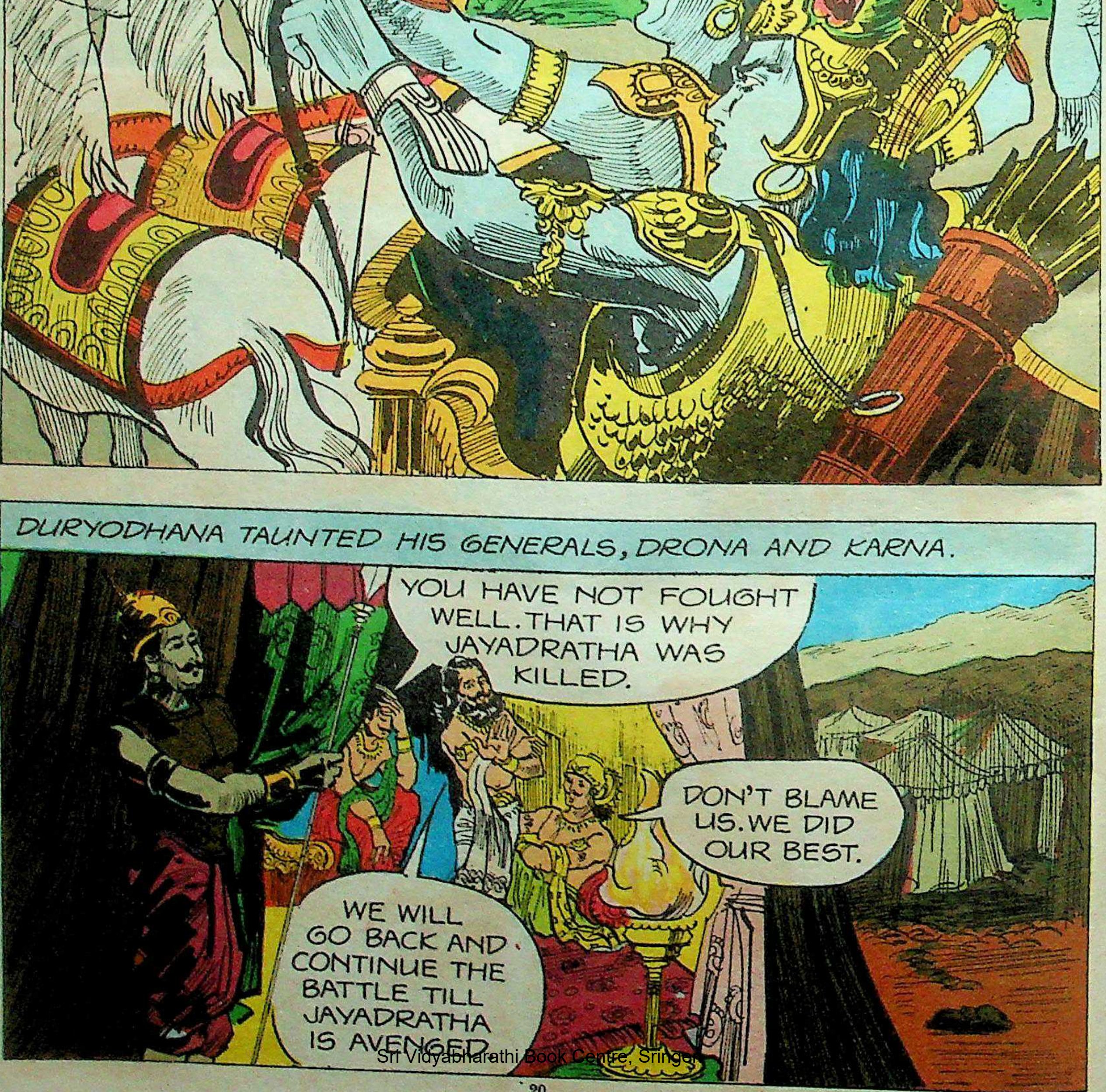
JAYADRATHA WAS THE CAUSE OF ABHIMANYU'S DEATH. ARJUNA SWORE TO KILL HIM BY SUNSET NEXT DAY.


IF I DON'T SUCCEED, I WILL KILL MYSELF!

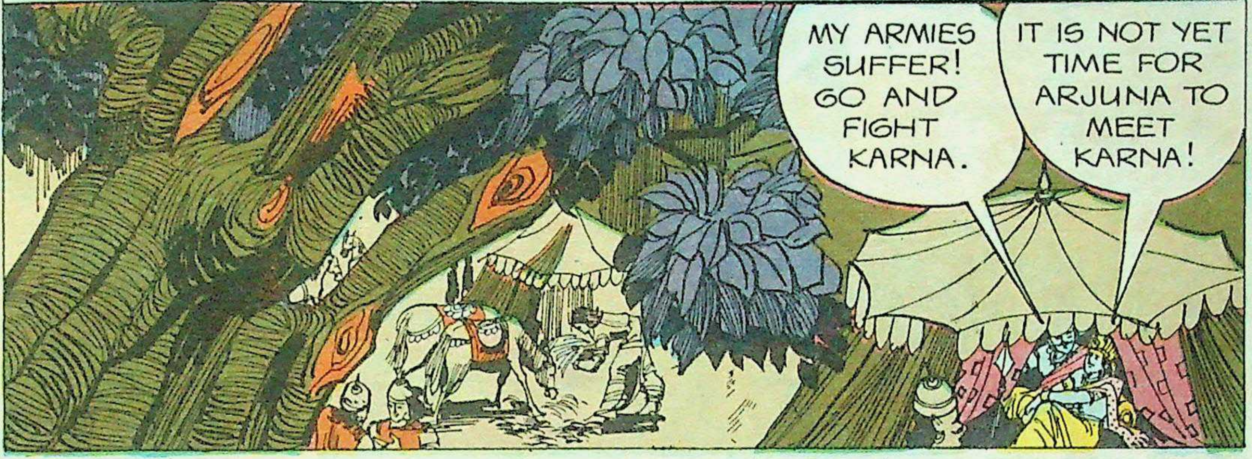
DURYODHANA CALLED HIS GENERALS TO HIM.


WE MUST GUARD JAYADRATHA FROM ARJUNA.
IF HE IS ALIVE AT SUNSET, ARJUNA WILL KILL HIMSELF AND THE WAR WILL END.

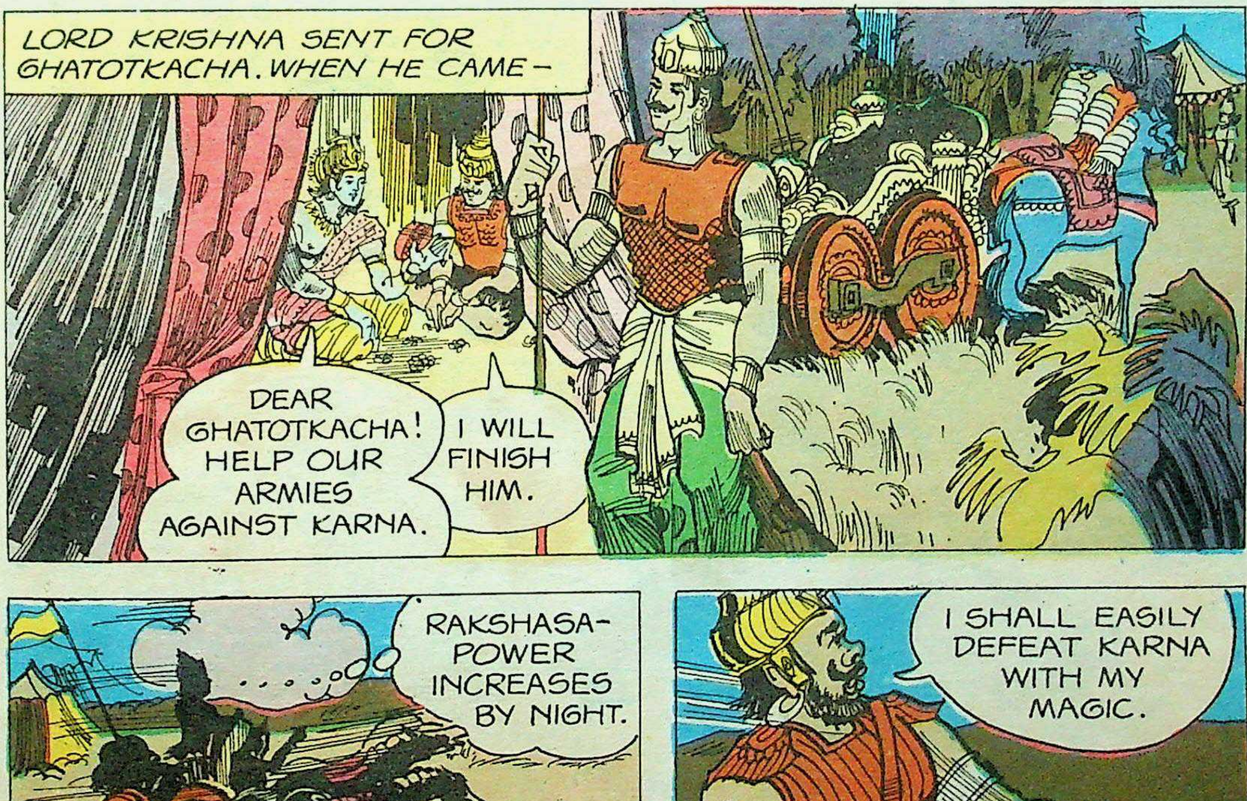

BEFORE SUNSET THE NEXT DAY, ARJUNA, WITH LORD KRISHNA'S HELP, KILLED JAYADRATHA.

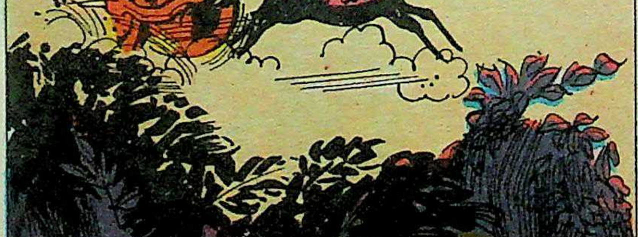

DURYODHANA TAUNTED HIS GENERALS, DRONA AND KARNA.
YOU HAVE NOT FOUGHT WELL. THAT IS WHY JAYADRATHA WAS KILLED.
DON'T BLAME US. WE DID OUR BEST.
WE WILL GO BACK AND CONTINUE THE BATTLE TILL JAYADRATHA IS AVENGED.

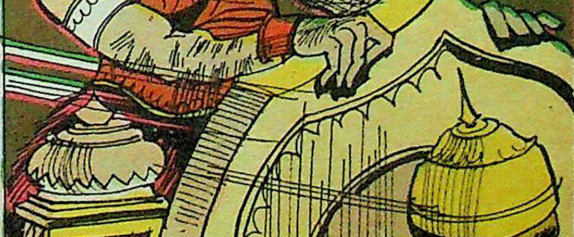
DRONA AND KARNA FOUGHT SO WELL THAT THE PANDAVAS WERE HARD-PRESSED. YUDHISHTHIRA CALLED ARJUNA AND KRISHNA.


MY ARMIES SUFFER! GO AND FIGHT KARNA.
IT IS NOT YET TIME FOR ARJUNA TO MEET KARNA!

LORD KRISHNA SENT FOR GHATOTKACHA. WHEN HE CAME–


DEAR GHATOTKACHA! HELP OUR ARMIES AGAINST KARNA.
I WILL FINISH HIM.


RAKSHASA-POWER INCREASES BY NIGHT.


I SHALL EASILY DEFEAT KARNA WITH MY MAGIC.

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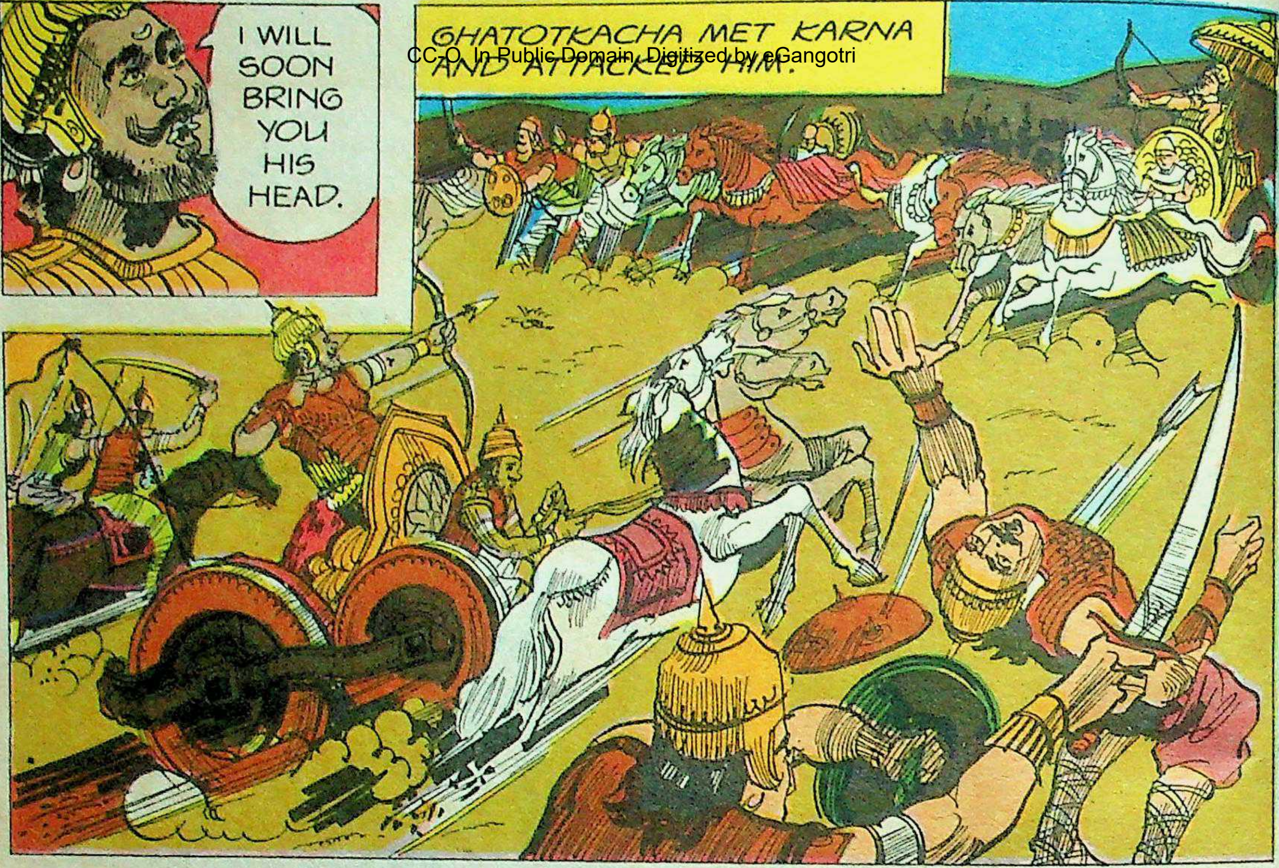
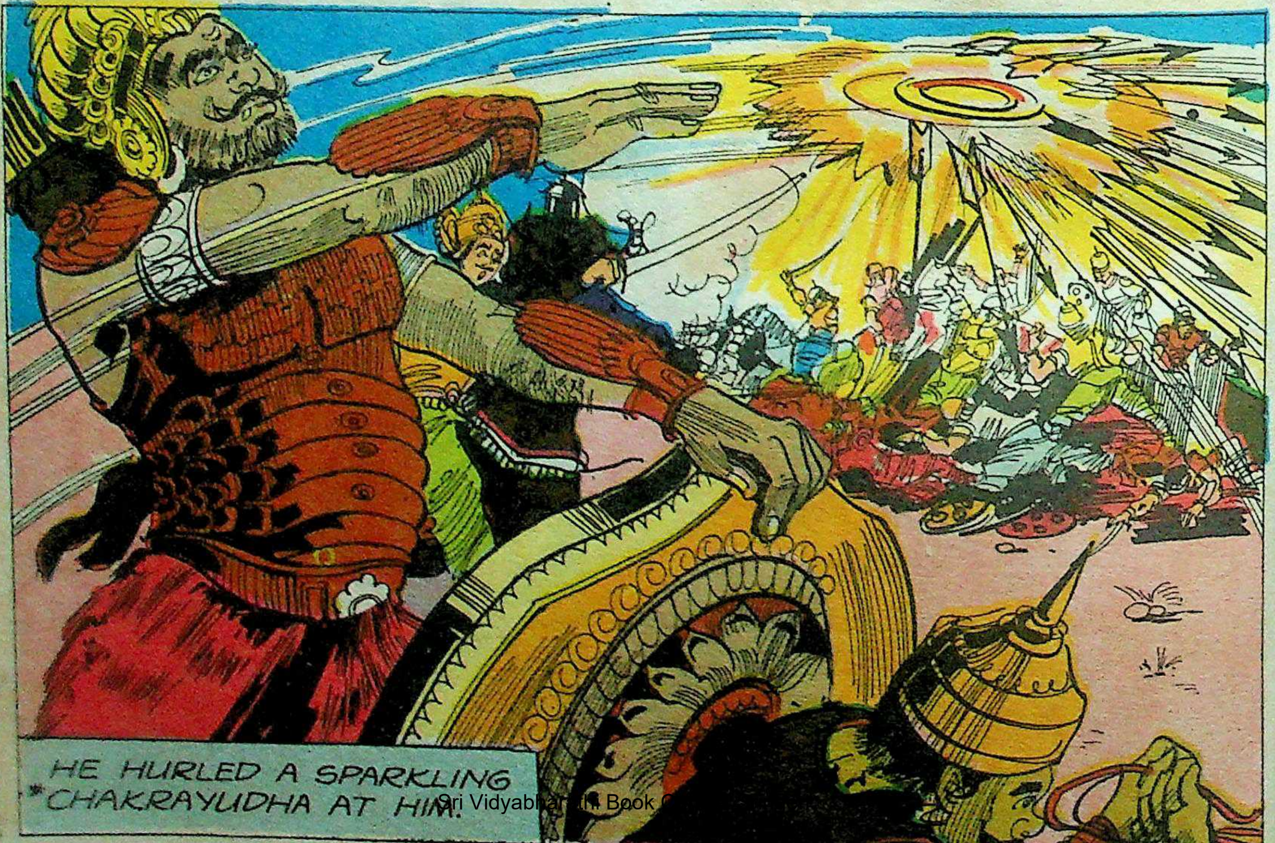

I WILL SOON BRING YOU HIS HEAD.

GHATOTKACHA MET KARNA AND ATTACKED HIM.

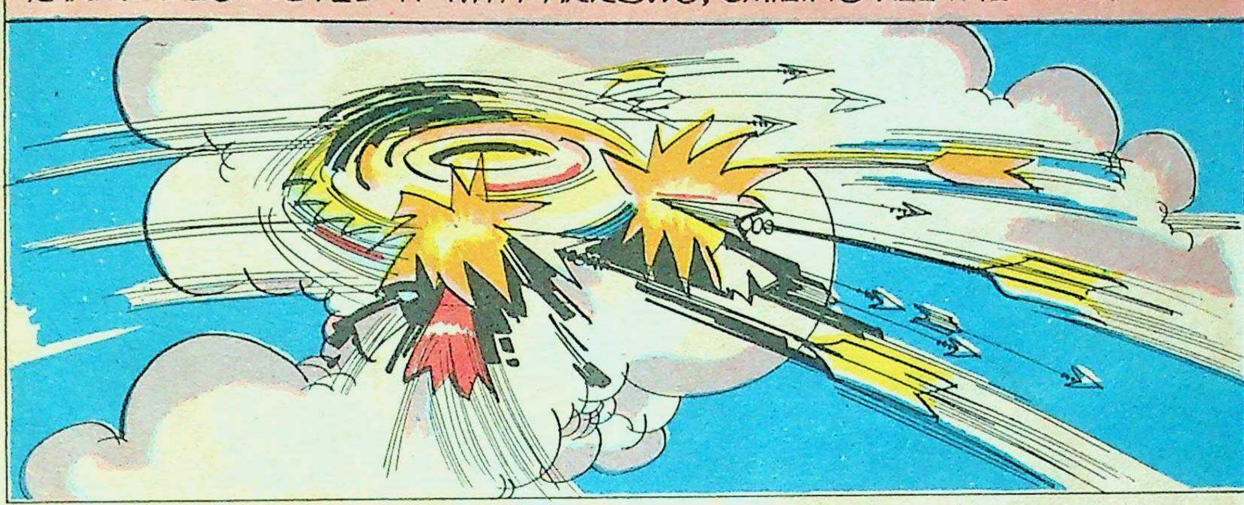


HE HURLED A SPARKLING *CHAKRAYUDHA AT HIM.

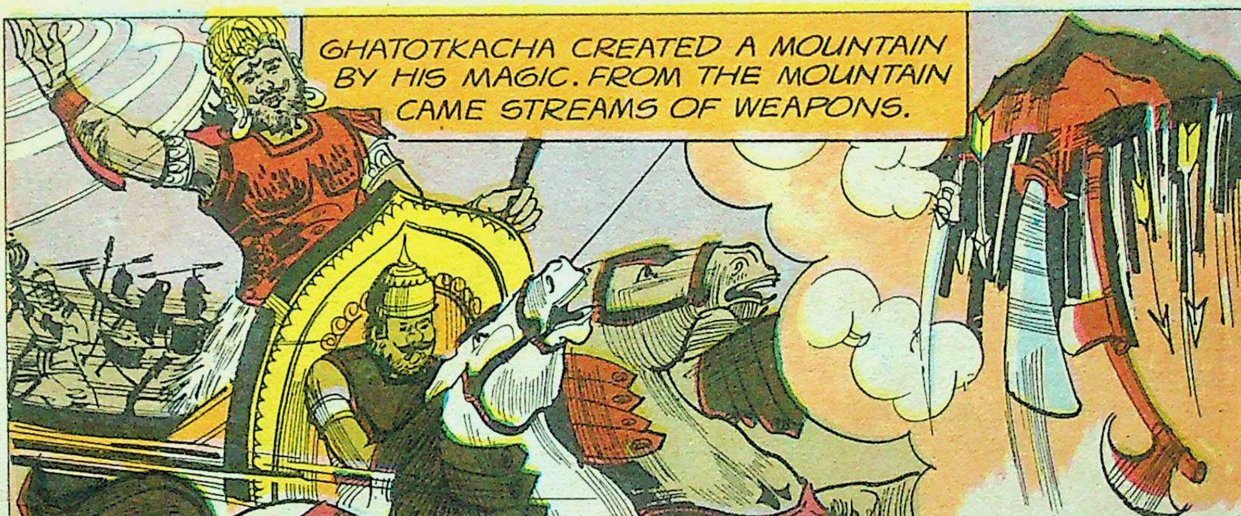
---

* DISC.

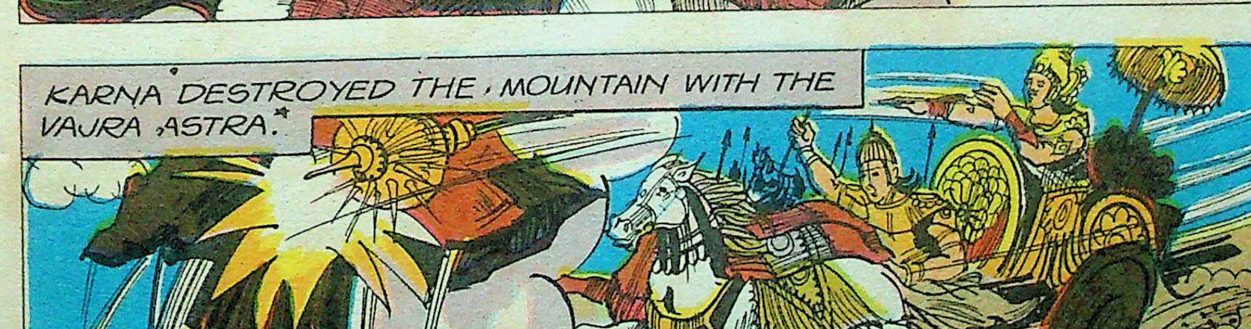
KARNA DESTROYED IT WITH ARROWS, SMILING ALL THE TIME.



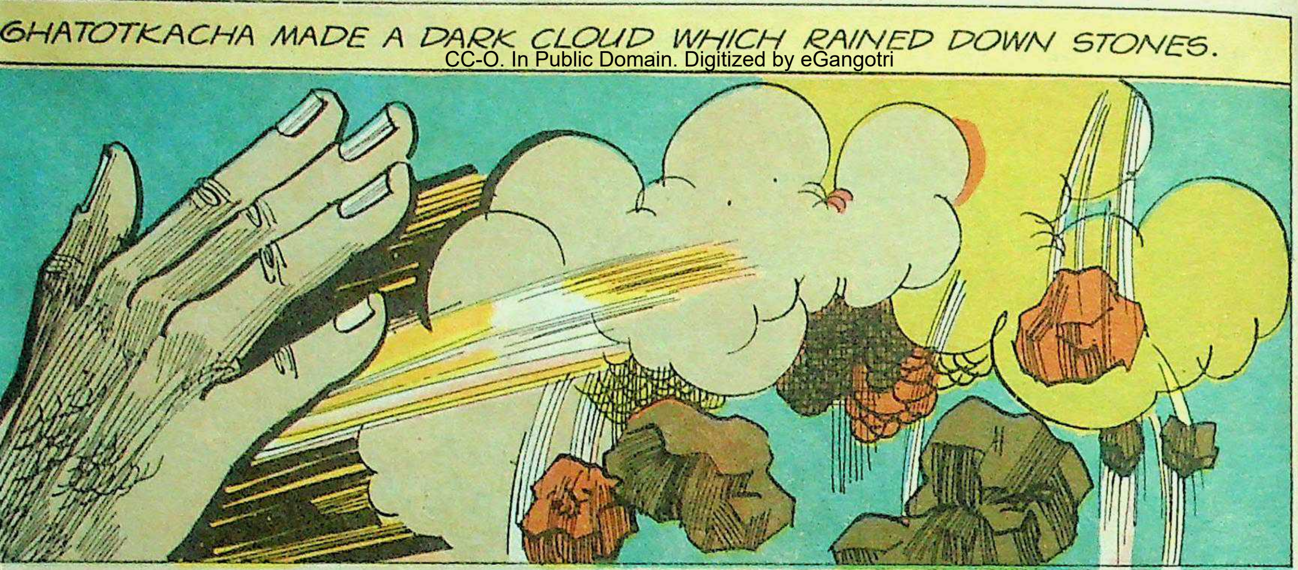
GHATOTKACHA CREATED A MOUNTAIN BY HIS MAGIC. FROM THE MOUNTAIN CAME STREAMS OF WEAPONS.

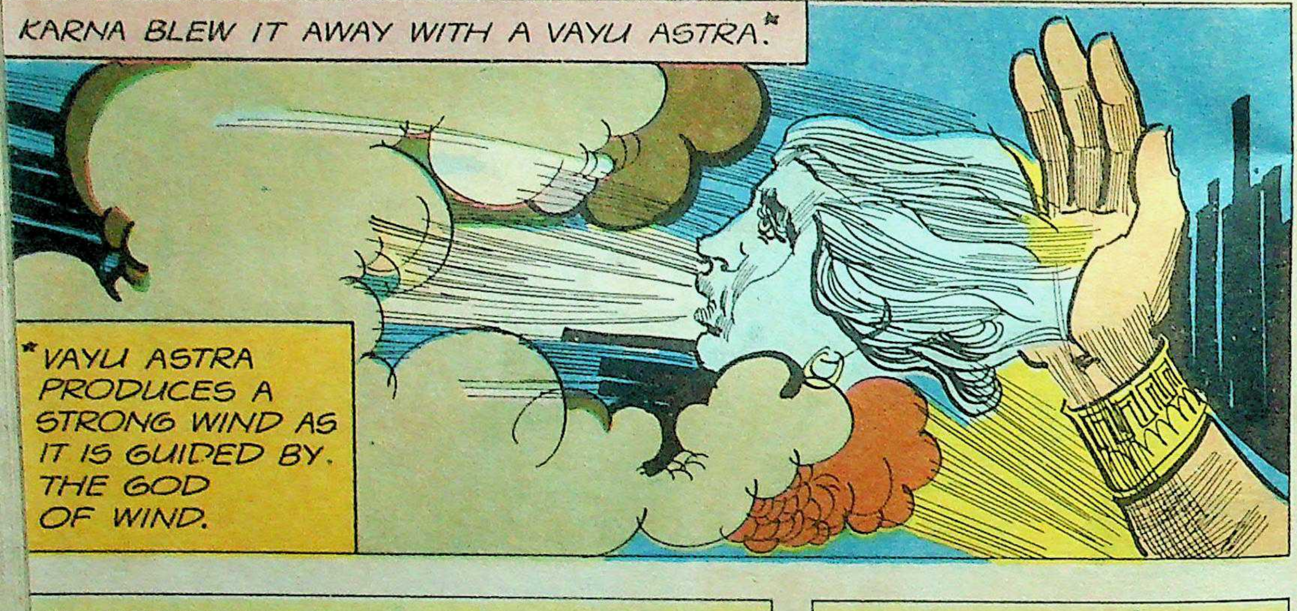


KARNA DESTROYED THE MOUNTAIN WITH THE VAJRA ASTRA.*

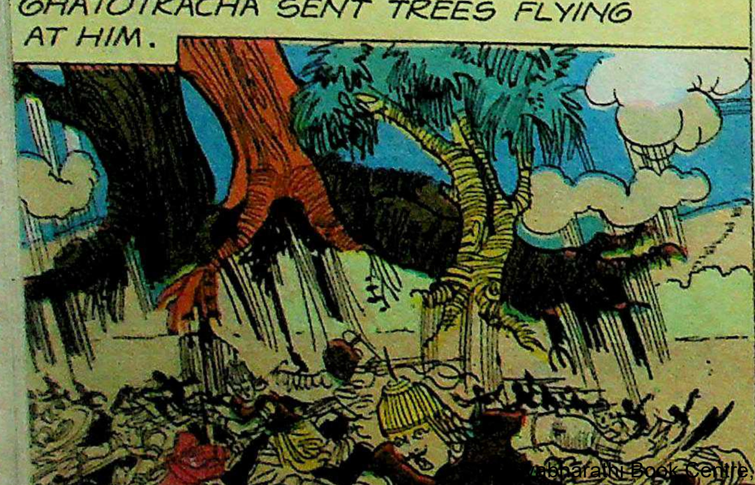


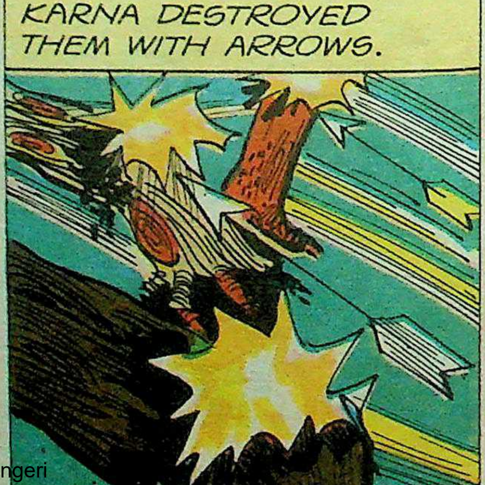
* THE VAJRA ASTRA IS HARD LIKE A THUNDERBOLT AND CAN BREAK EVEN MOUNTAINS.

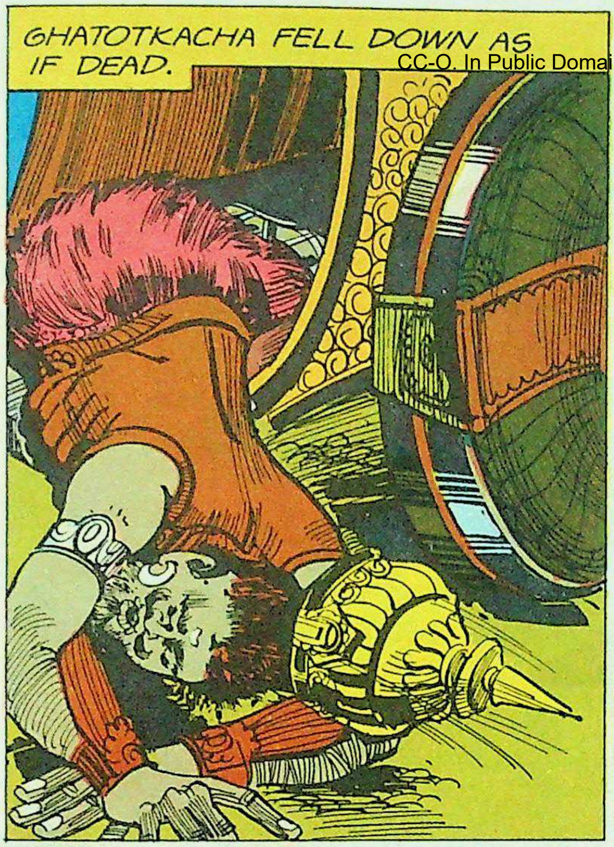

GHATOTKACHA MADE A DARK CLOUD WHICH RAINED DOWN STONES.


KARNA BLEW IT AWAY WITH A VAYU ASTRA.*

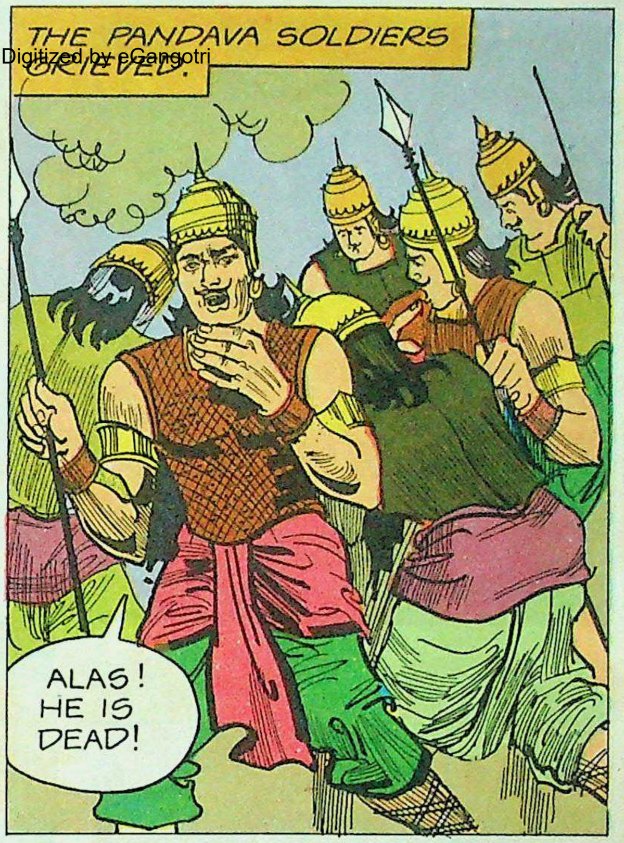
*VAYU ASTRA PRODUCES A STRONG WIND AS IT IS GUIDED BY THE GOD OF WIND.


GHATOTKACHA SENT TREES FLYING AT HIM.


KARNA DESTROYED THEM WITH ARROWS.

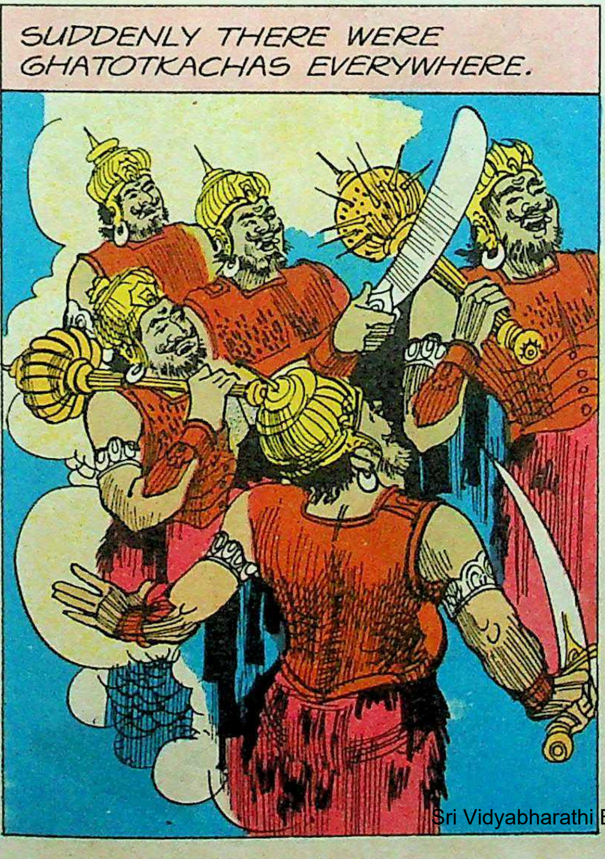


GHATOTKACHA FELL DOWN AS IF DEAD.

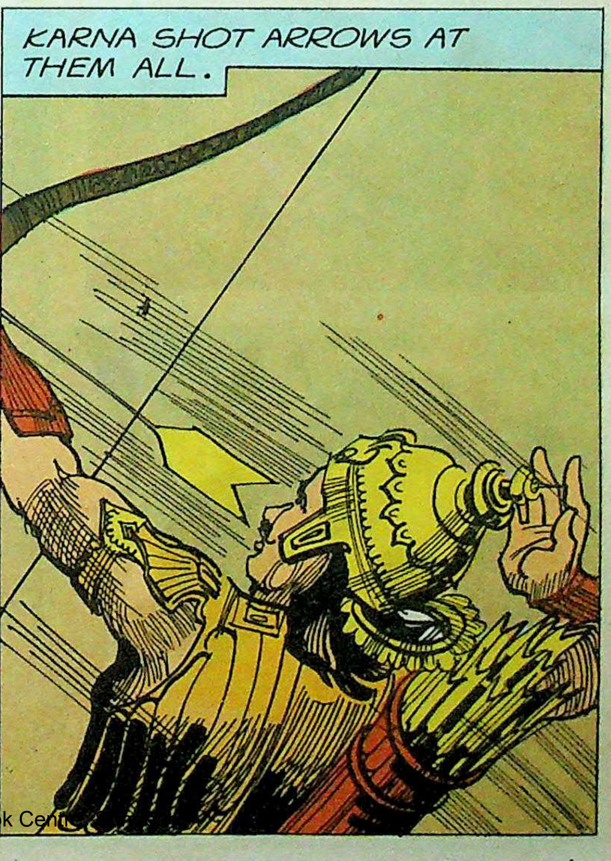


THE PANDAVA SOLDIERS GRIEVED.

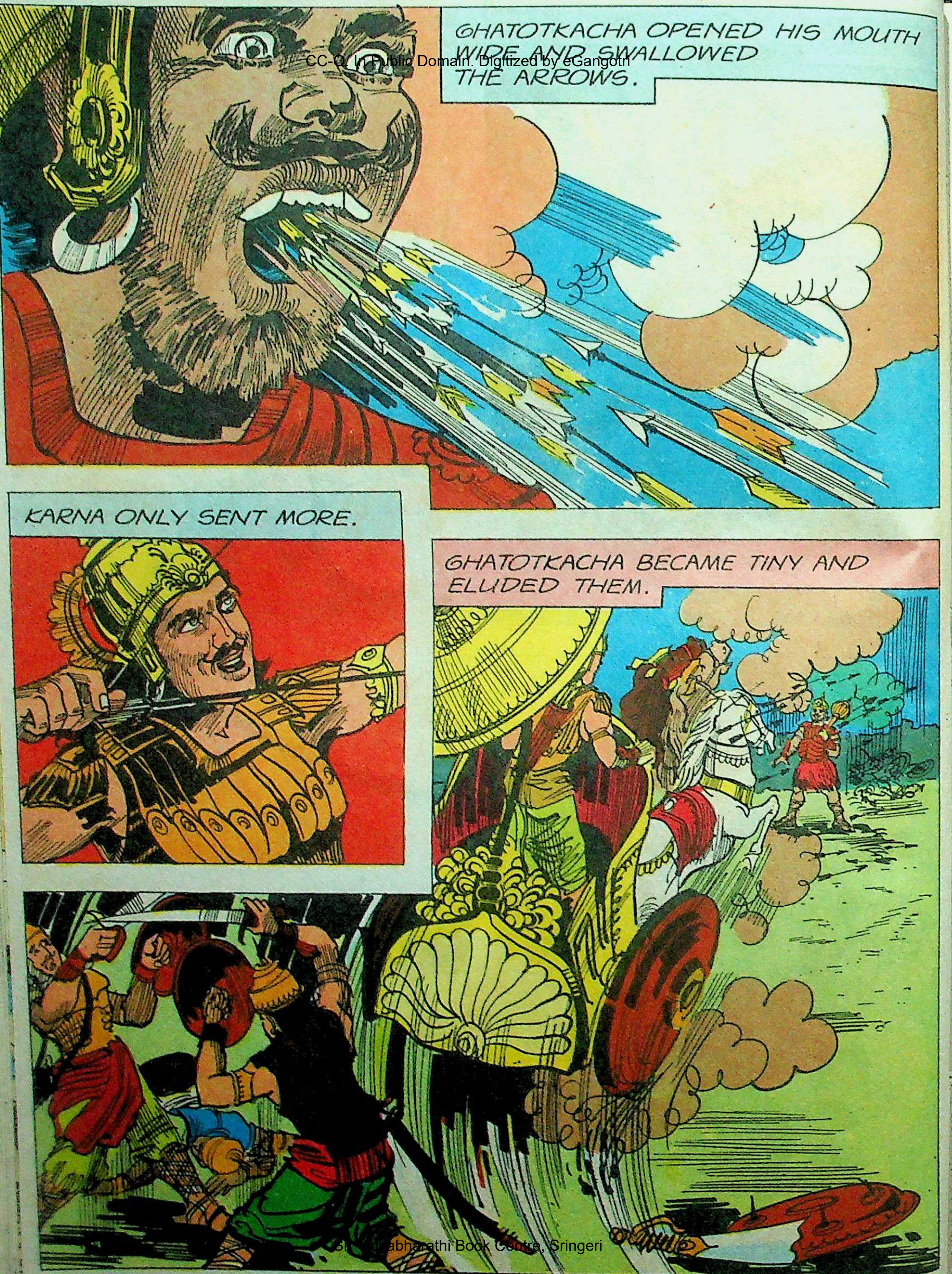
ALAS! HE IS DEAD!



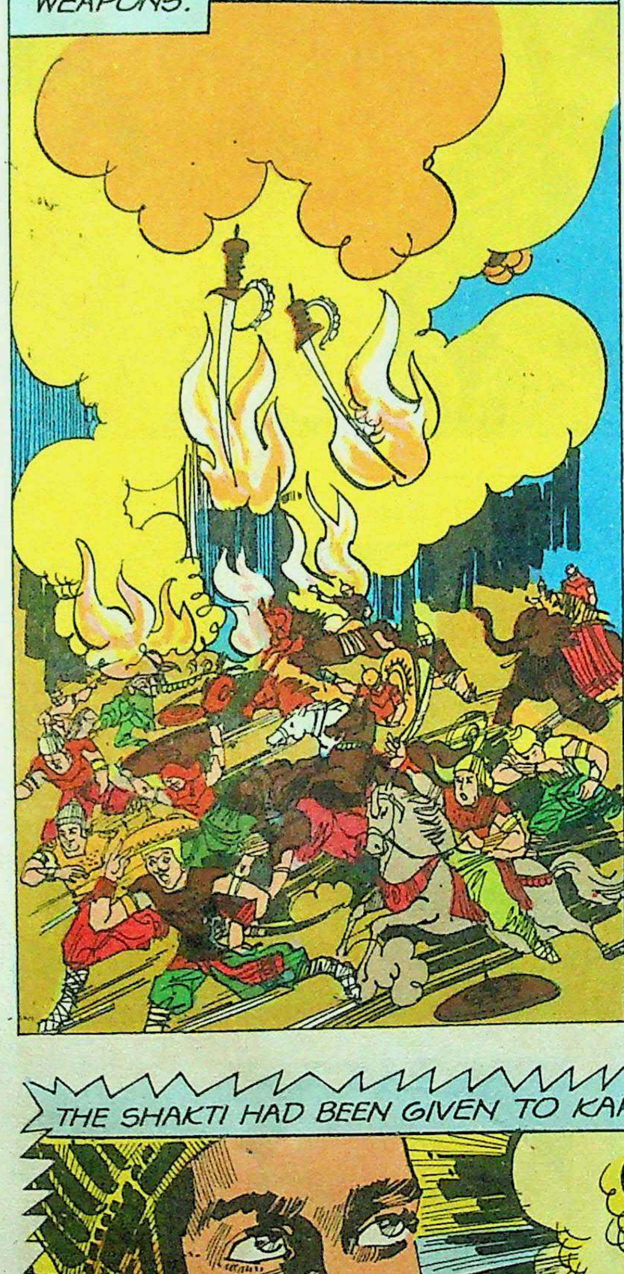
SUDDENLY THERE WERE GHATOTKACHAS EVERYWHERE.



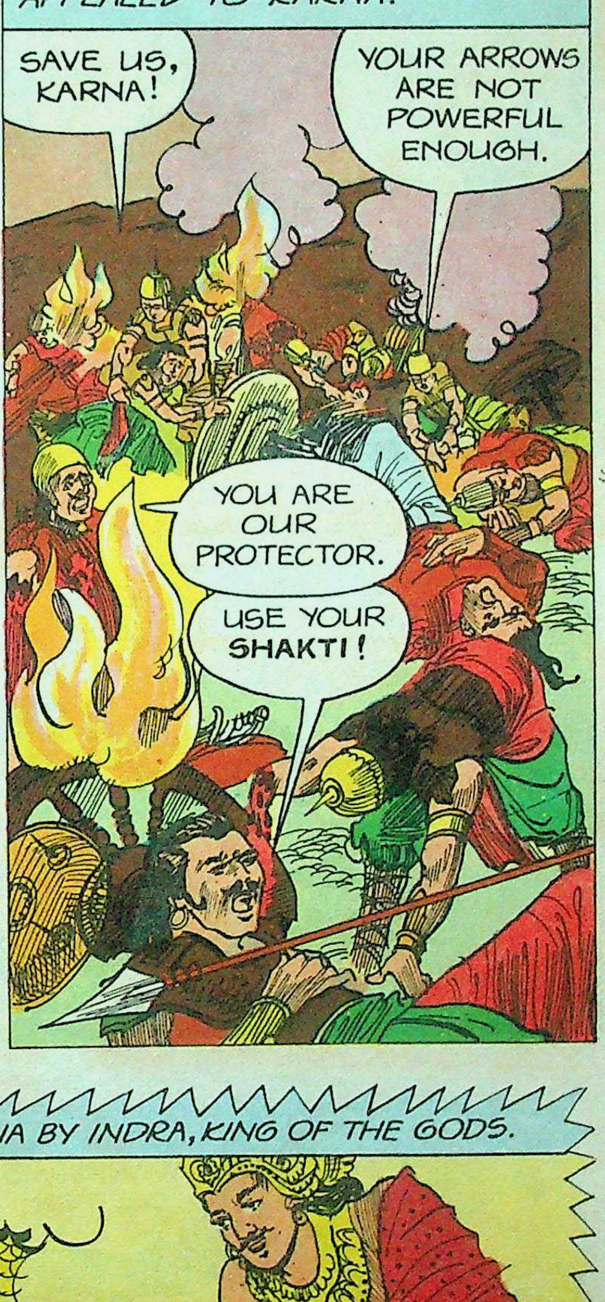
KARNA SHOT ARROWS AT THEM ALL.


GHATOTKACHA OPENED HIS MOUTH WIDE AND SWALLOWED THE ARROWS.
KARNA ONLY SENT MORE.
GHATOTKACHA BECAME TINY AND ELUDED THEM.

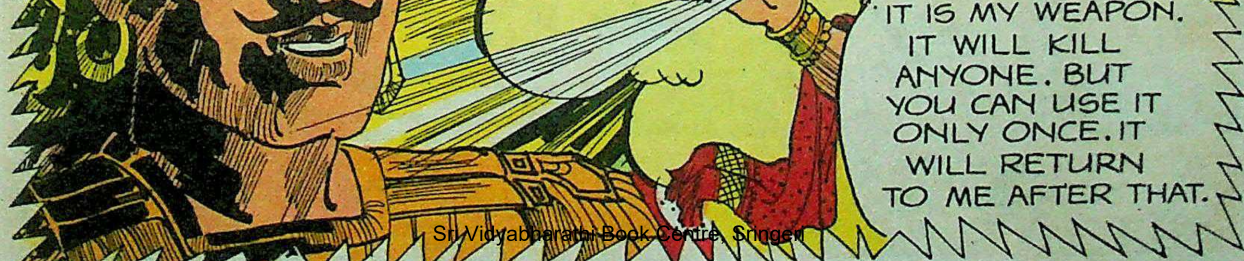
THEN HE BECAME INVISIBLE AND SENT SHOWERS OF FIERY WEAPONS.



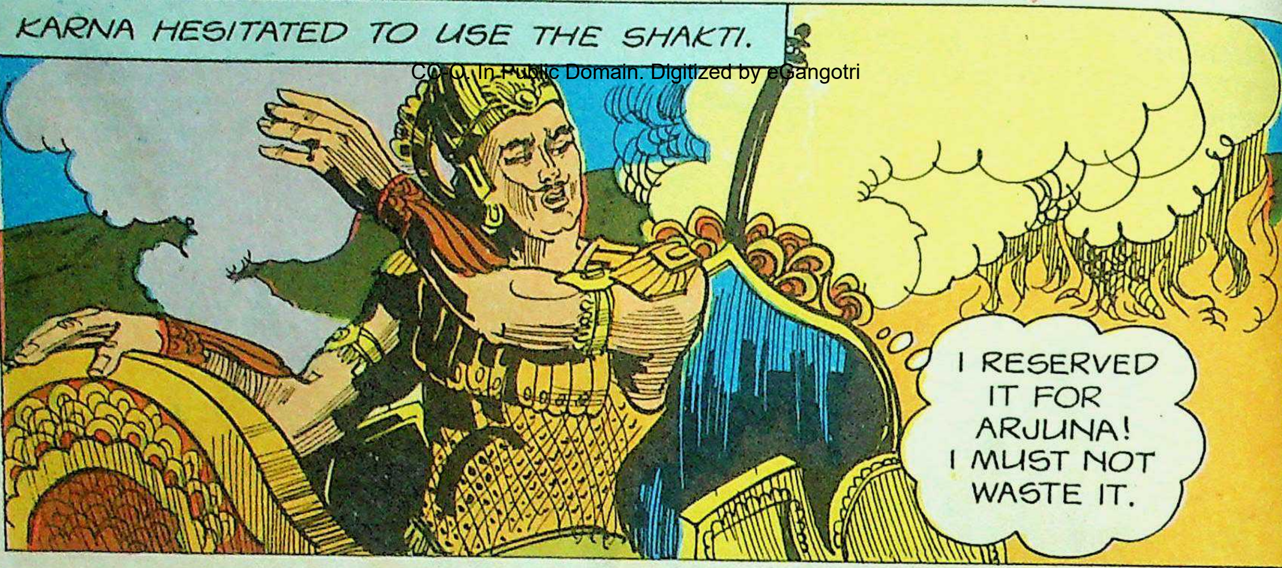
THE TERRIFIED KAURAVA FORCES APPEALED TO KARNA.


SAVE US, KARNA!
YOUR ARROWS ARE NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH.
YOU ARE OUR PROTECTOR.
USE YOUR **SHAKTI**!

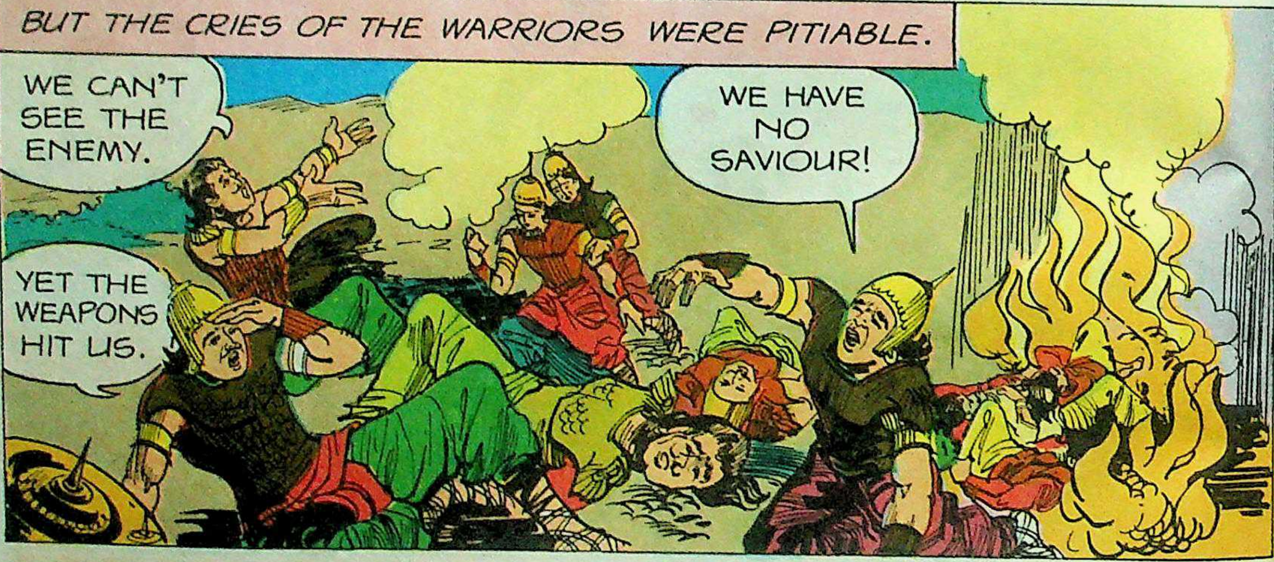
THE SHAKTI HAD BEEN GIVEN TO KARNA BY INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.

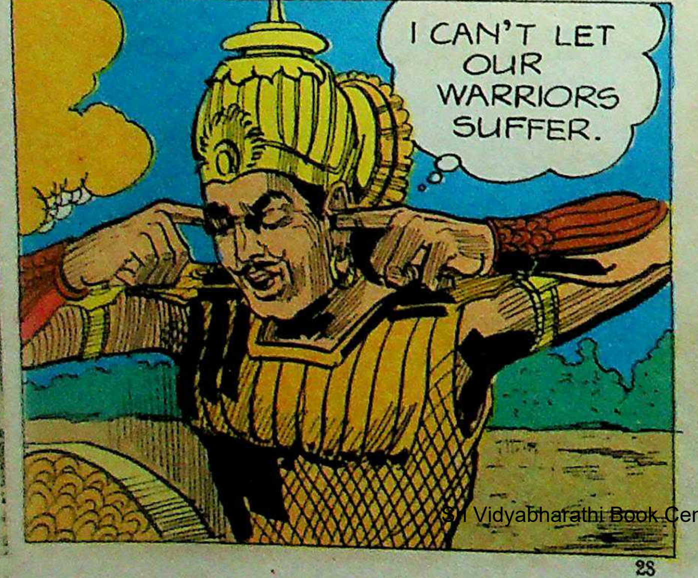

IT IS MY WEAPON. IT WILL KILL ANYONE. BUT YOU CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE. IT WILL RETURN TO ME AFTER THAT.

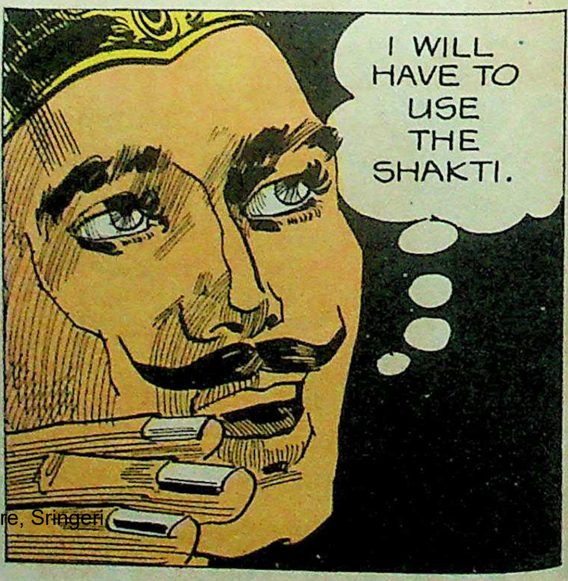
KARNA HESITATED TO USE THE SHAKTI.


I RESERVED IT FOR ARJUNA! I MUST NOT WASTE IT.

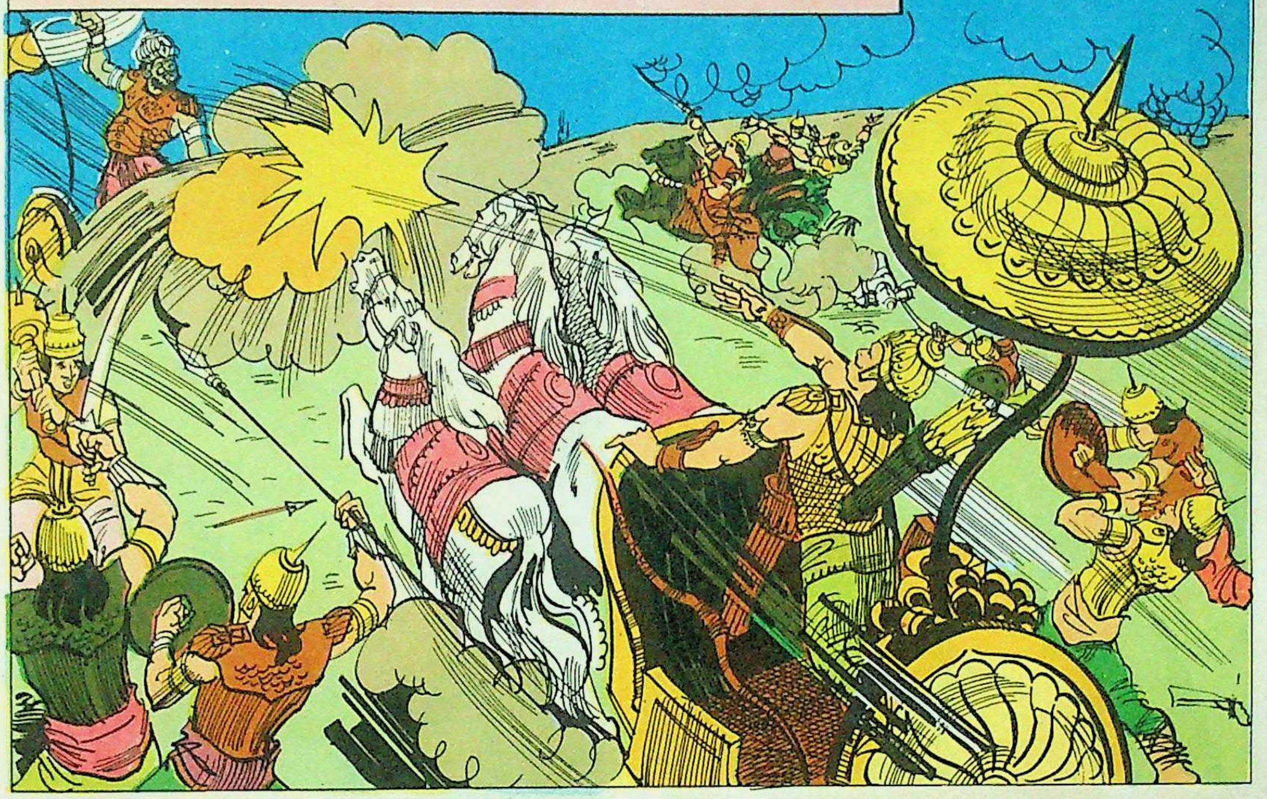
BUT THE CRIES OF THE WARRIORS WERE PITIABLE.


WE CAN'T SEE THE ENEMY.
WE HAVE NO SAVIOUR!
YET THE WEAPONS HIT US.

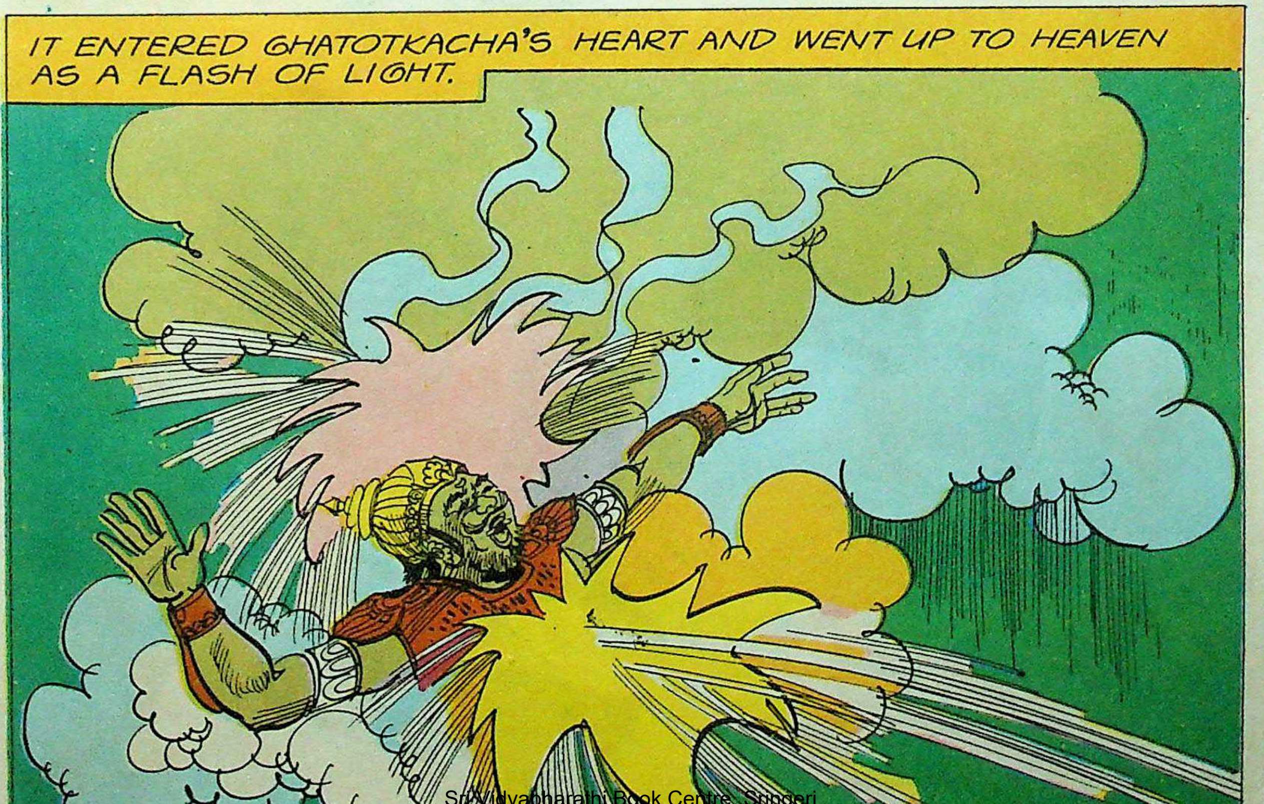

I CAN'T LET OUR WARRIORS SUFFER.

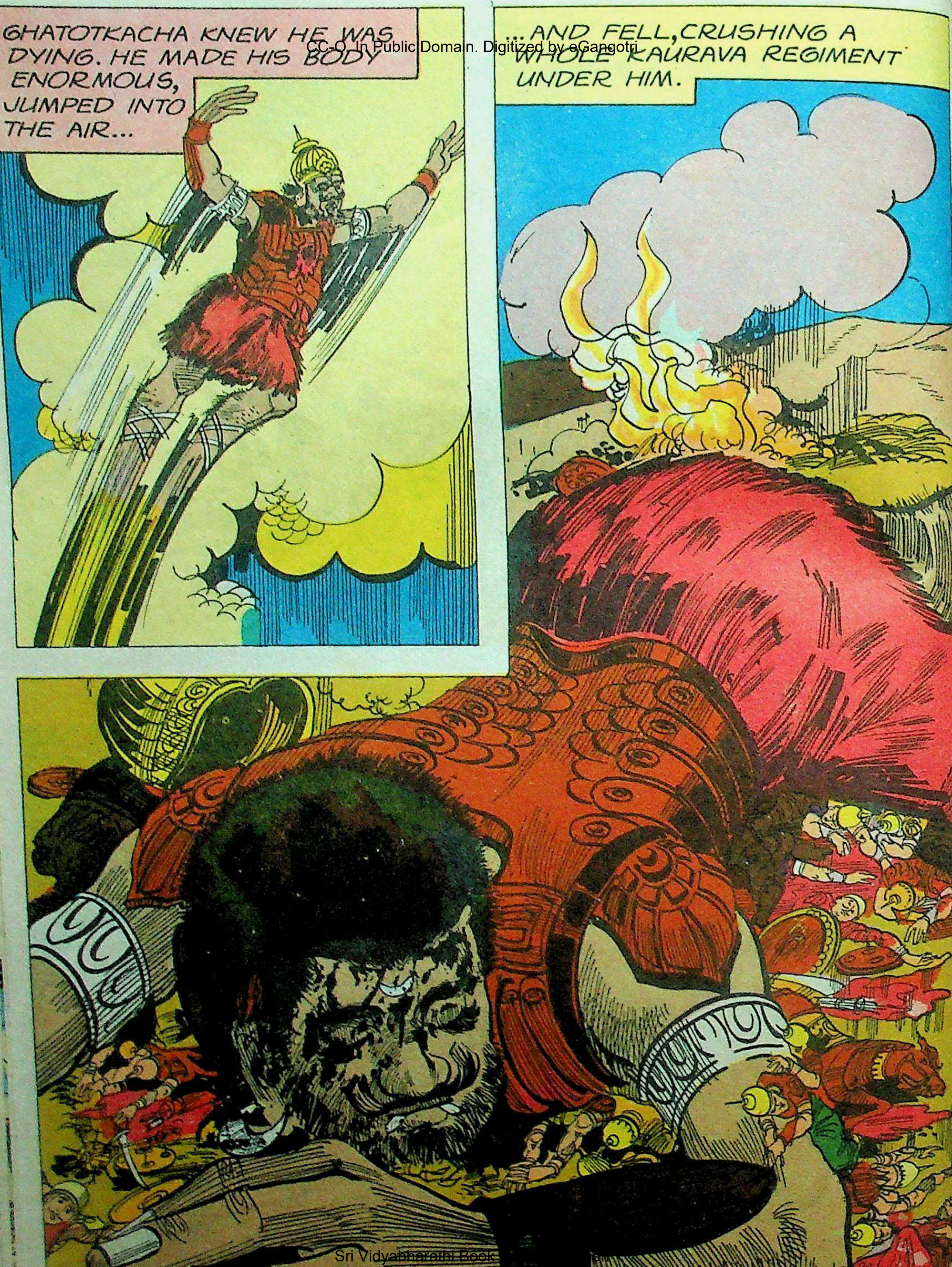

I WILL HAVE TO USE THE SHAKTI.

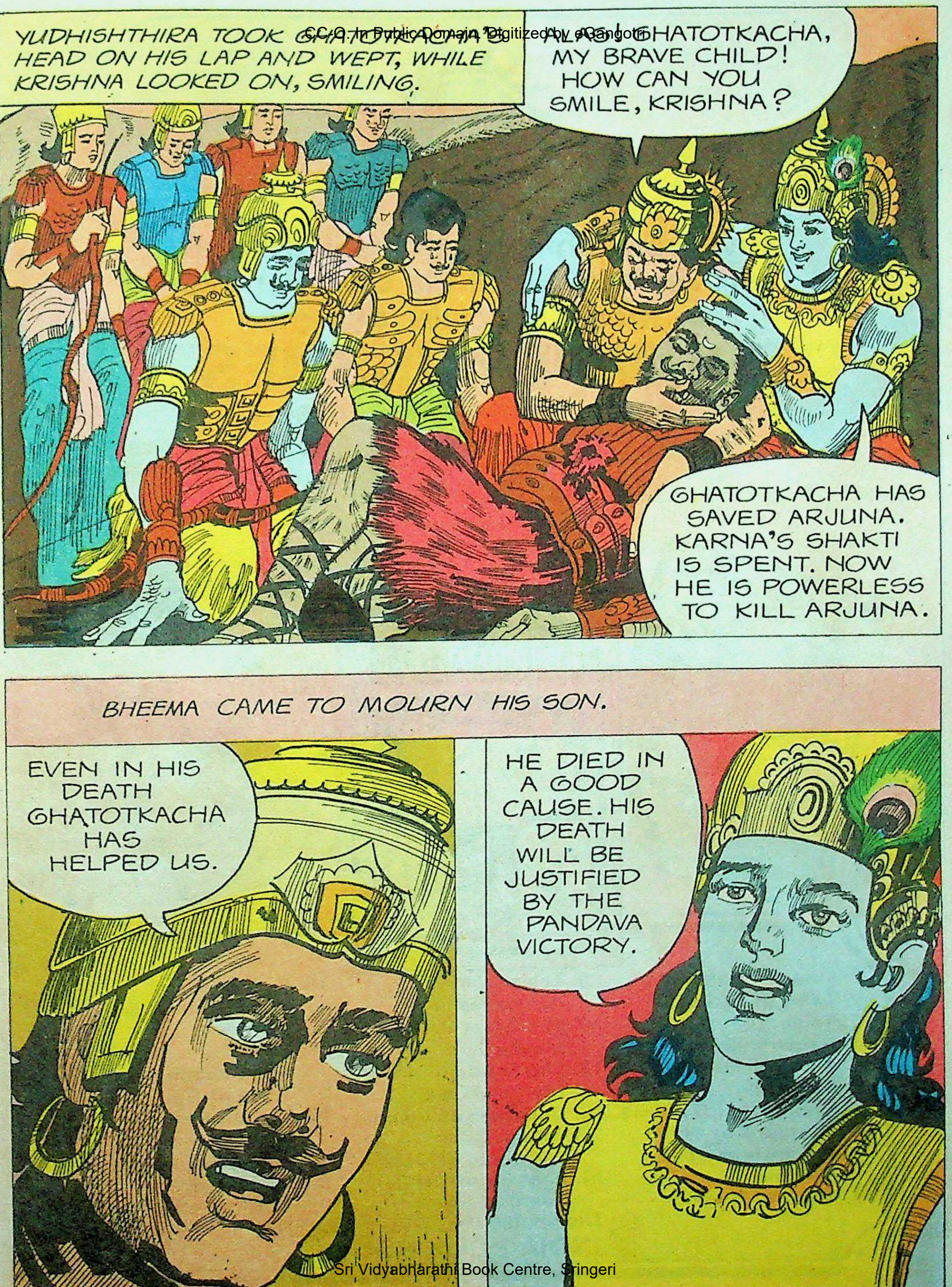
KARNA PICKED UP THE SHAKTI AND THREW IT.



IT ENTERED GHATOTKACHA'S HEART AND WENT UP TO HEAVEN AS A FLASH OF LIGHT.




GHATOTKACHA KNEW HE WAS DYING. HE MADE HIS BODY ENORMOUS, JUMPED INTO THE AIR...
...AND FELL, CRUSHING A WHOLE KAURAVA REGIMENT UNDER HIM.


YUDHISHTHIRA TOOK GHATOTKACHA'S HEAD ON HIS LAP AND WEPT, WHILE KRISHNA LOOKED ON, SMILING.
ALAS! GHATOTKACHA, MY BRAVE CHILD! HOW CAN YOU SMILE, KRISHNA?
GHATOTKACHA HAS SAVED ARJUNA. KARNA'S SHAKTI IS SPENT. NOW HE IS POWERLESS TO KILL ARJUNA.
BHEEMA CAME TO MOURN HIS SON.
EVEN IN HIS DEATH GHATOTKACHA HAS HELPED US.
HE DIED IN A GOOD CAUSE. HIS DEATH WILL BE JUSTIFIED BY THE PANDAVA VICTORY.

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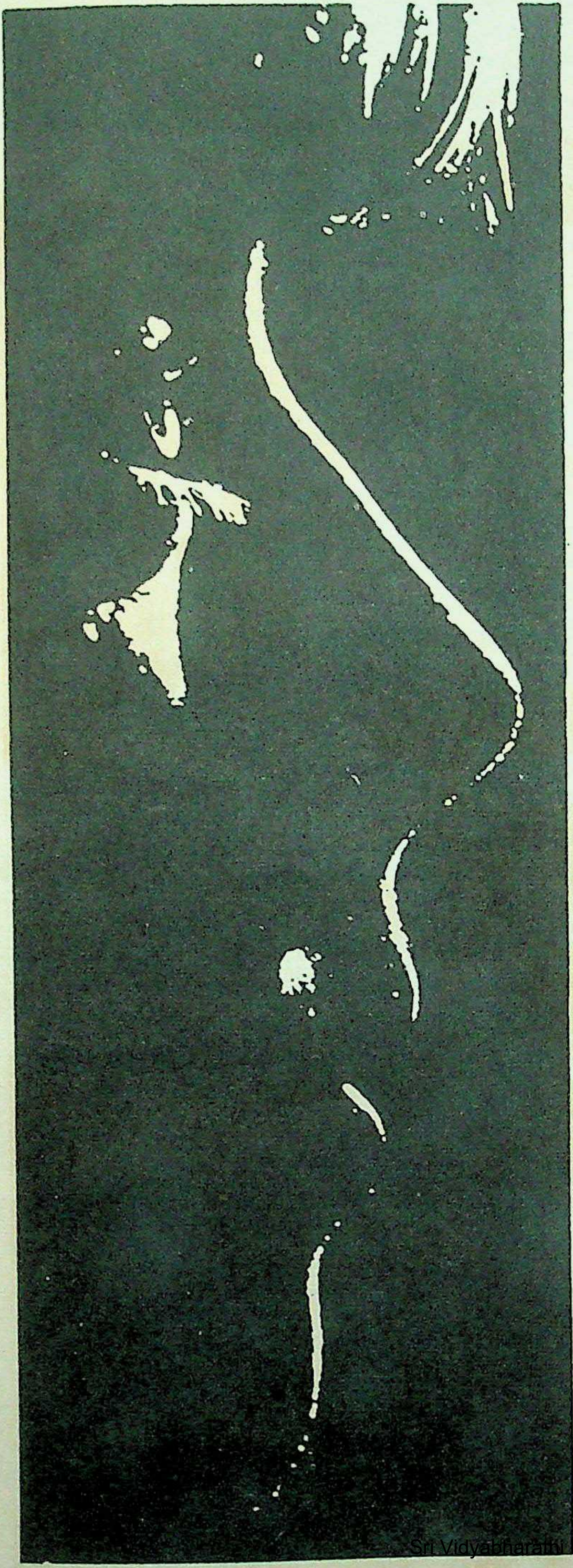

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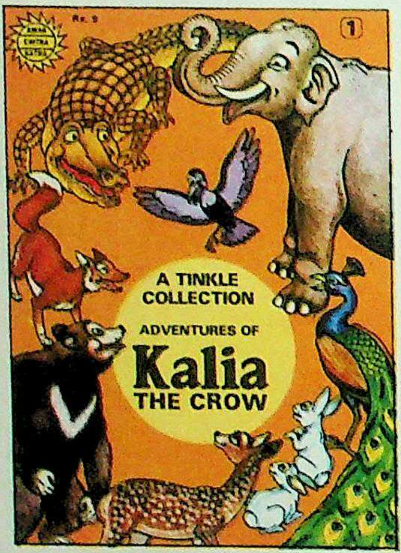
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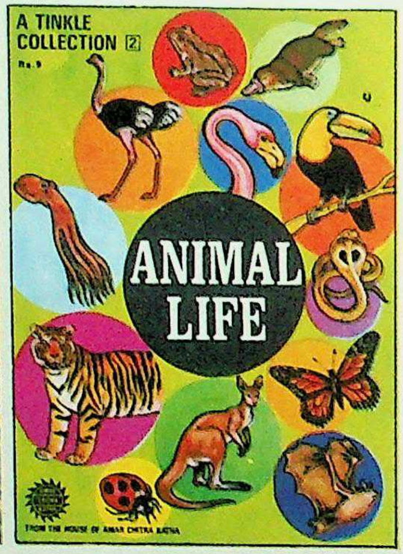
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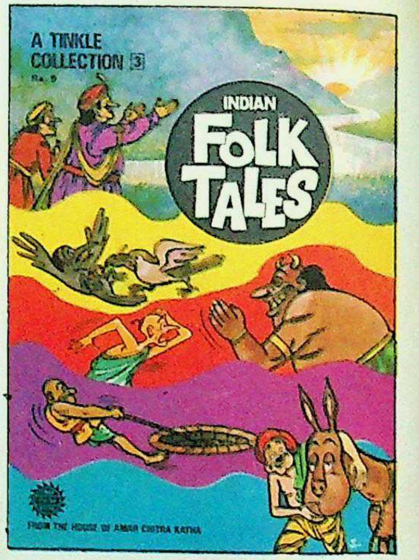
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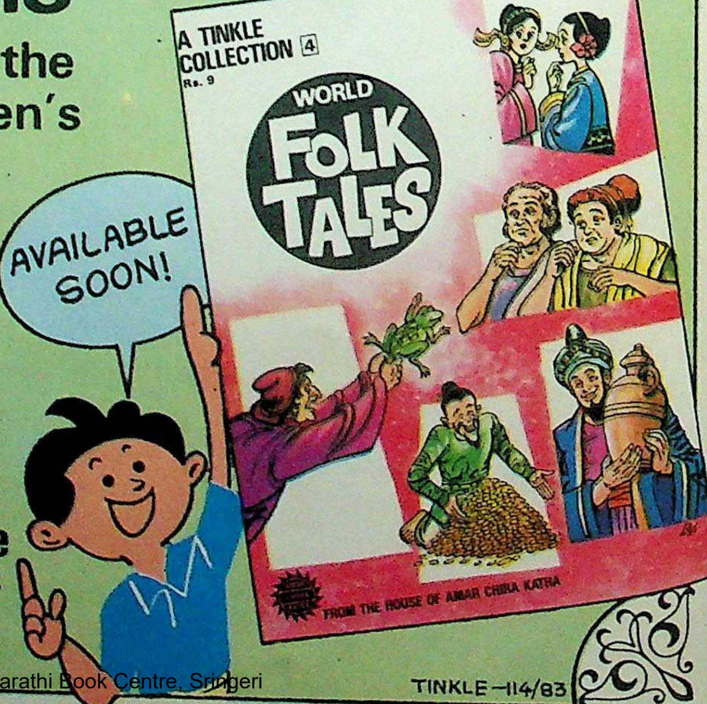
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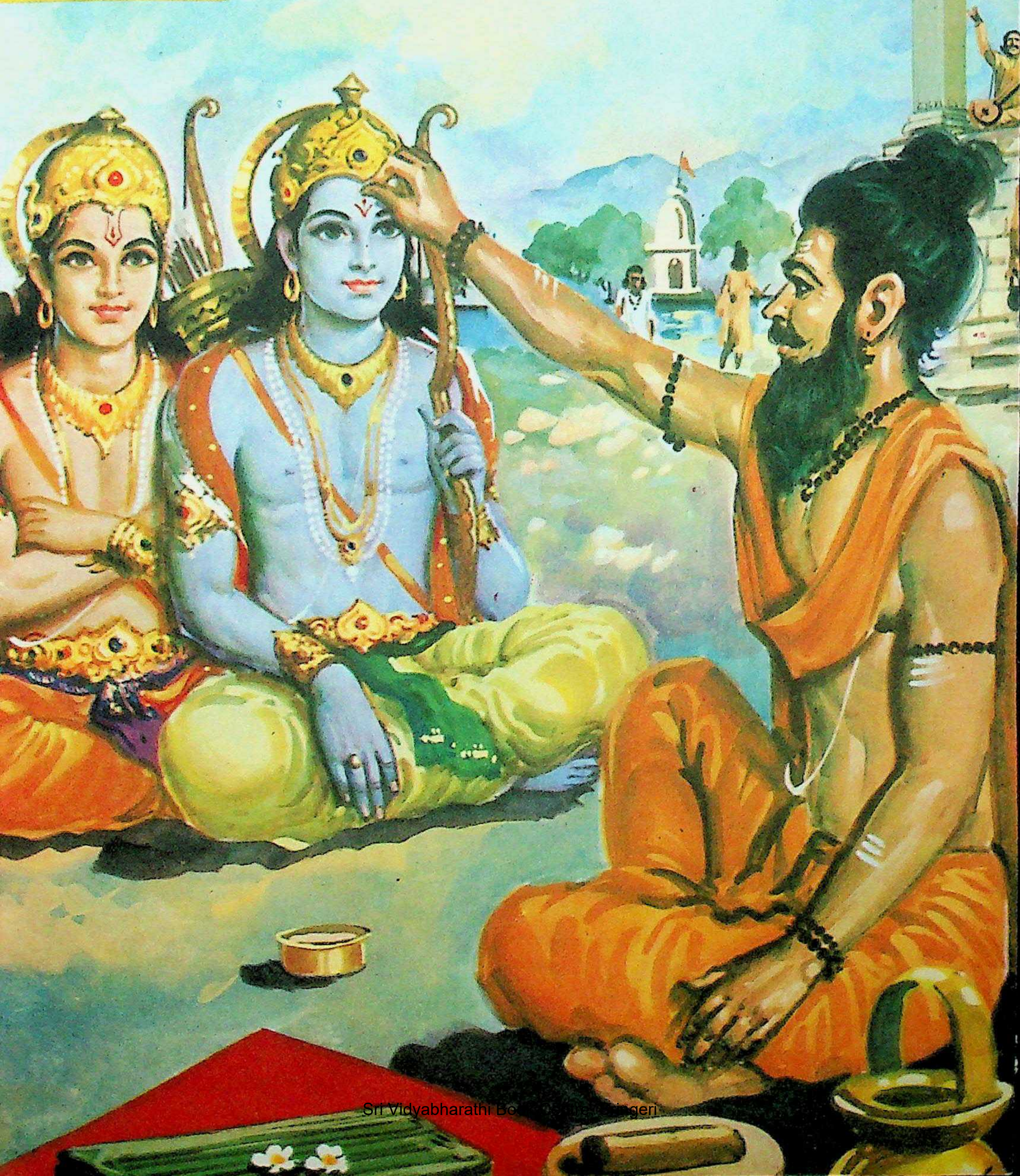

Sri Vidyabharathi Bo... Sringeri

The fourth centenary of the completion of 'Ramcharit-manas' was recently celebrated all over the country. This great work of Tulsidas which upholds the Indian way of life, has given inspiration and sustenance to several distressed Indian minds for generations and has proved to be a great integrating influence in the Indian sub-continent. It was written at a time when a very vast area of India was under Mughal rule. Amongst the Hindus, there were frequent controversies between the worshippers of Shiva and Vishnu and again between the worshippers of Rama and Krishna. There were also the Shakta and yogic cults which were almost cut off from the mainstream of Indian life. It is to the credit of Tulsidas that he tried to weave all these cults into an integrated whole.

He made his Rama say that he would not tolerate anyone who showed disrespect to Shiva. He worshipped not only at the temples dedicated to Rama but also at those dedicated to Krishna. He also composed 'Krishna Gitavali.' His works and teachings stressed the importance of the life of a householder and weaned the people away from the tantric cults.

Tulsidas hailed from a poor family of Rajapur in Uttar Pradesh. He was orphaned soon after his birth and even his foster-mother died when he was barely seven years old. When he was married, he became deeply attached to his wife, Ratna. She was the first person in his life whom he could call his own.

One day not finding her at home on his return, he became extremely restless and rushed to his father-in-law's house in the dead of the night, braving heavy rains and a storm.

But Ratna rebuked him and said, "Had you loved Rama as intensely as you do this bundle of flesh and bones, you would have overcome all mortal fears". This was the turning point in his life.

The story as narrated in this book is mostly based on legends.

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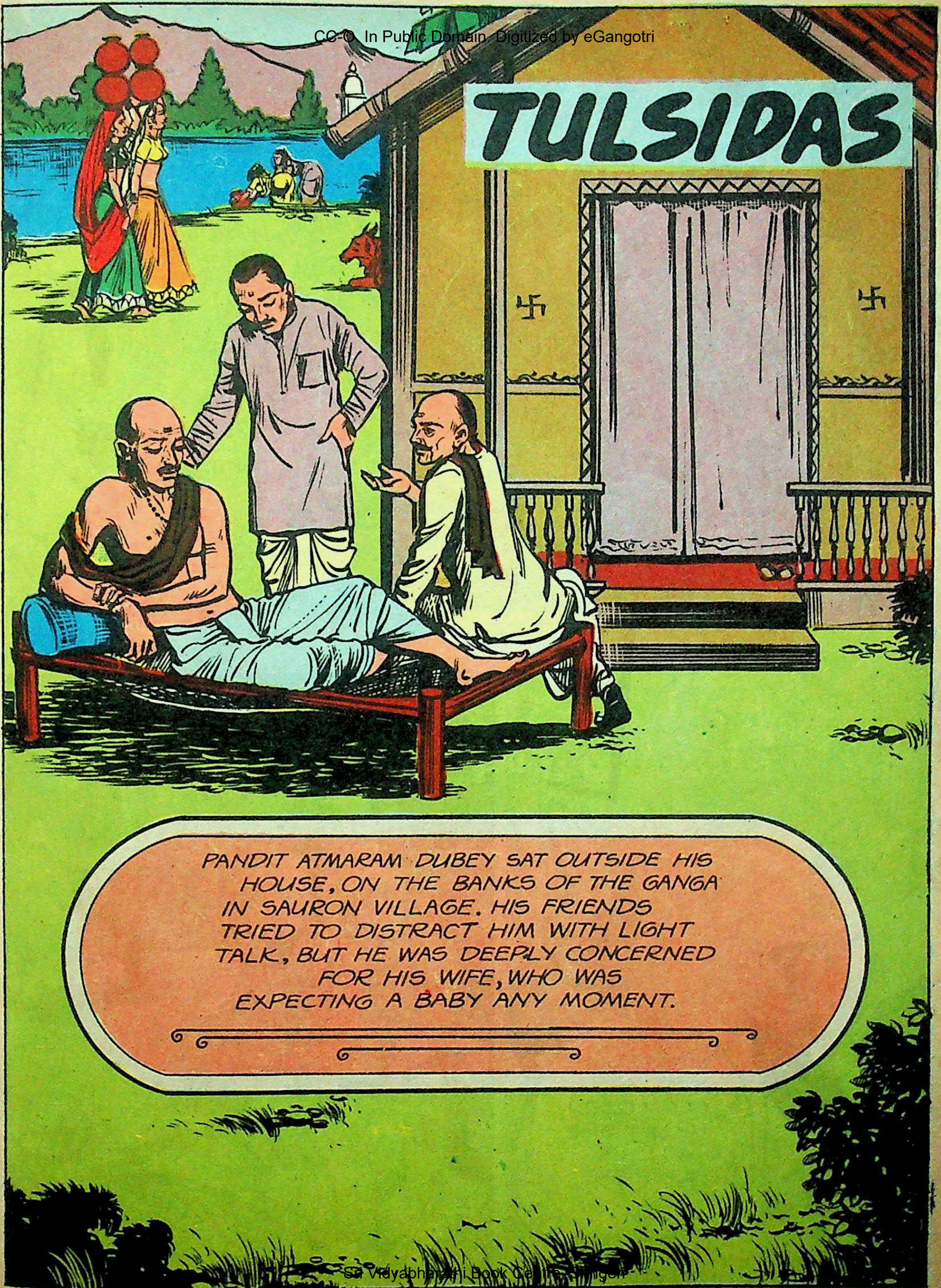
TULSIDAS



PANDIT ATMARAM DUBEY SAT OUTSIDE HIS HOUSE, ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA IN SAURON VILLAGE. HIS FRIENDS TRIED TO DISTRACT HIM WITH LIGHT TALK, BUT HE WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED FOR HIS WIFE, WHO WAS EXPECTING A BABY ANY MOMENT.

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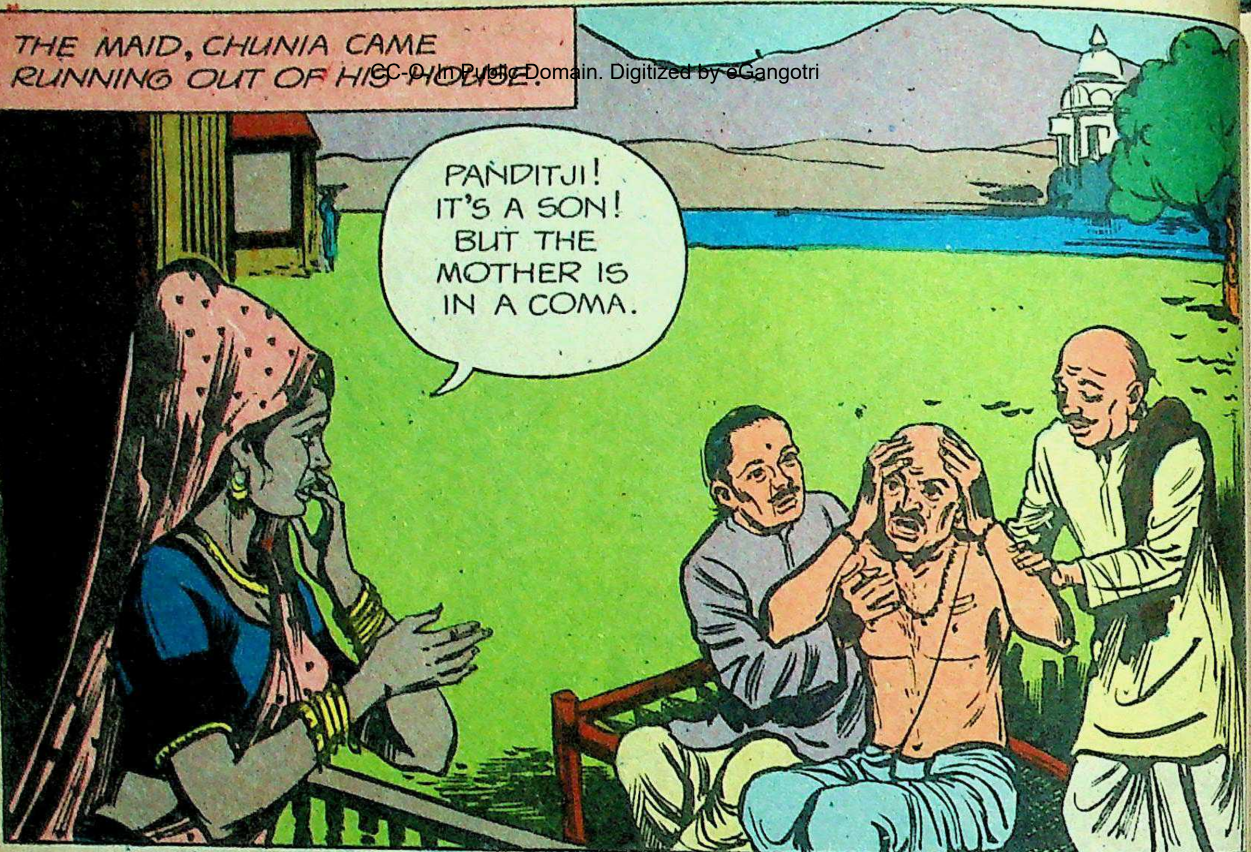
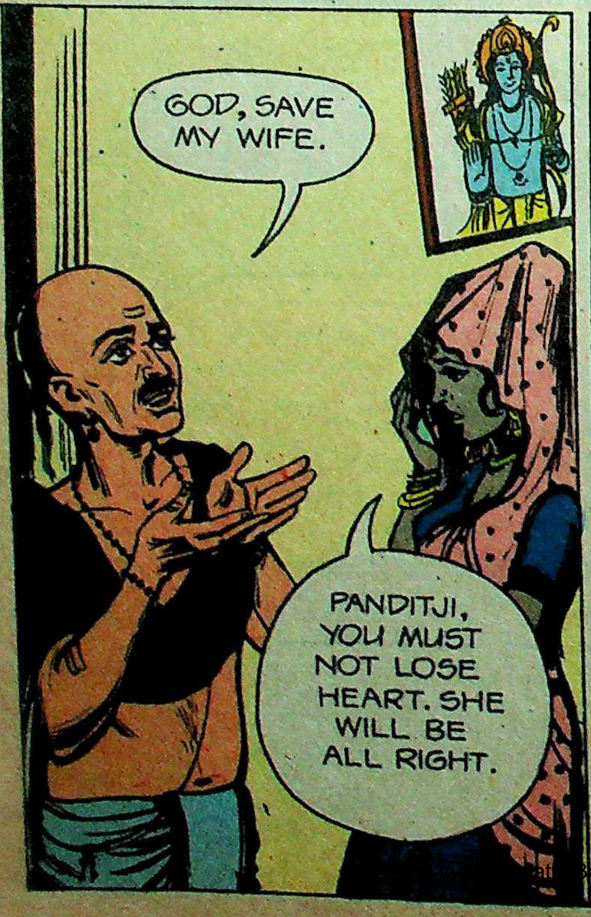
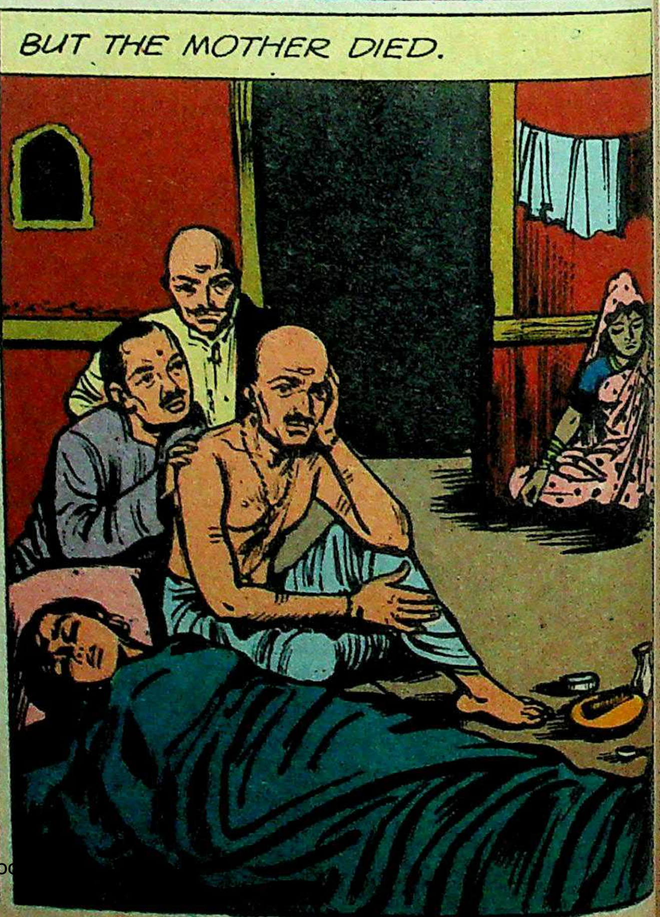
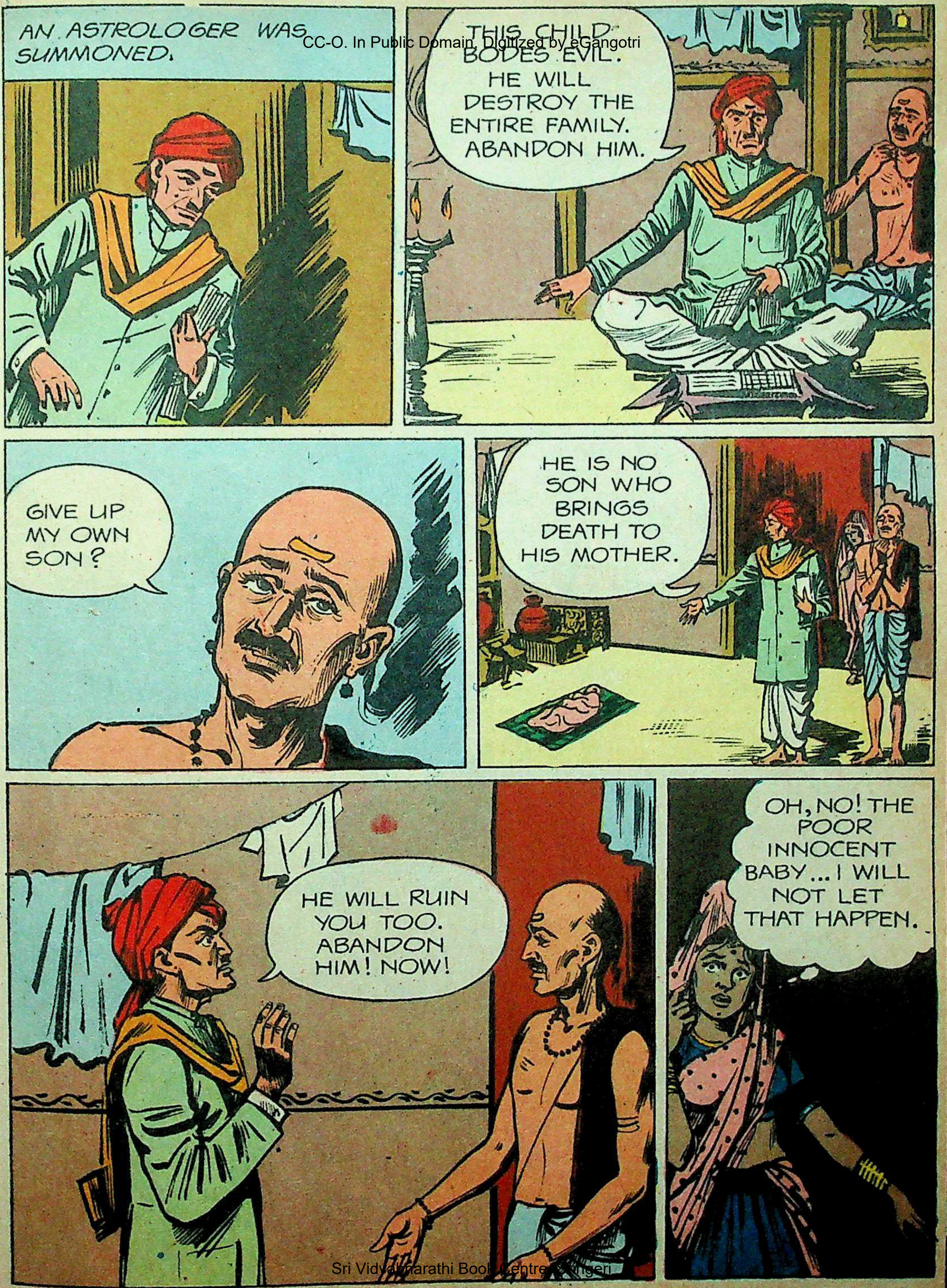
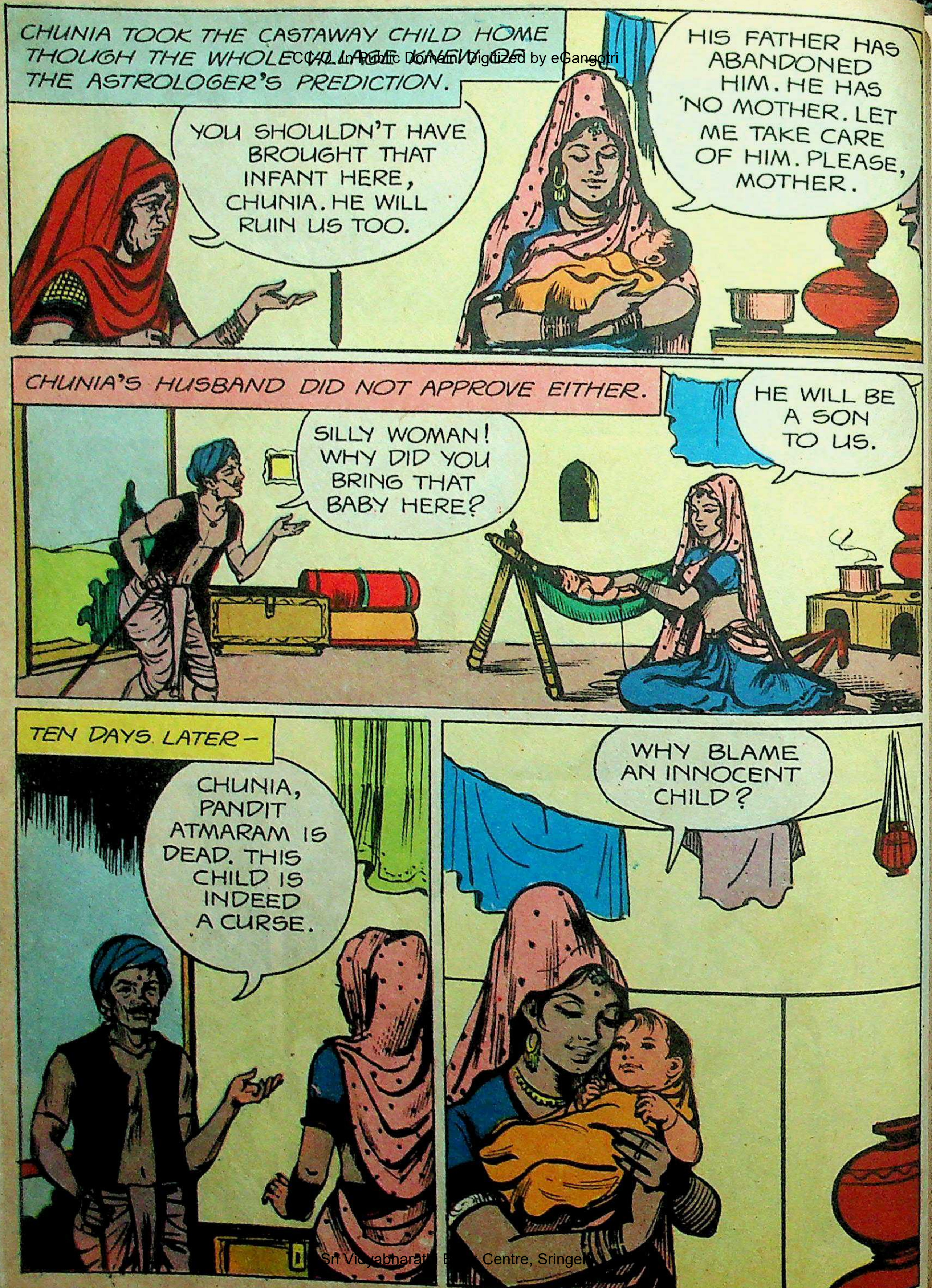

THE MAID, CHUNIA CAME RUNNING OUT OF HIS HOUSE.
PANDITJI! IT'S A SON! BUT THE MOTHER IS IN A COMA.


GOD, SAVE MY WIFE.
PANDITJI, YOU MUST NOT LOSE HEART. SHE WILL BE ALL RIGHT.


BUT THE MOTHER DIED.


AN ASTROLOGER WAS SUMMONED.
THIS CHILD BODES EVIL. HE WILL DESTROY THE ENTIRE FAMILY. ABANDON HIM.
GIVE UP MY OWN SON?
HE IS NO SON WHO BRINGS DEATH TO HIS MOTHER.
HE WILL RUIN YOU TOO. ABANDON HIM! NOW!
OH, NO! THE POOR INNOCENT BABY... I WILL NOT LET THAT HAPPEN.


CHUNIA TOOK THE CASTAWAY CHILD HOME THOUGH THE WHOLE VILLAGE KNEW OF THE ASTROLOGER'S PREDICTION.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE BROUGHT THAT INFANT HERE, CHUNIA. HE WILL RUIN US TOO.
HIS FATHER HAS ABANDONED HIM. HE HAS NO MOTHER. LET ME TAKE CARE OF HIM. PLEASE, MOTHER.
CHUNIA'S HUSBAND DID NOT APPROVE EITHER.
SILLY WOMAN! WHY DID YOU BRING THAT BABY HERE?
HE WILL BE A SON TO US.
TEN DAYS LATER –
CHUNIA, PANDIT ATMARAM IS DEAD. THIS CHILD IS INDEED A CURSE.
WHY BLAME AN INNOCENT CHILD?

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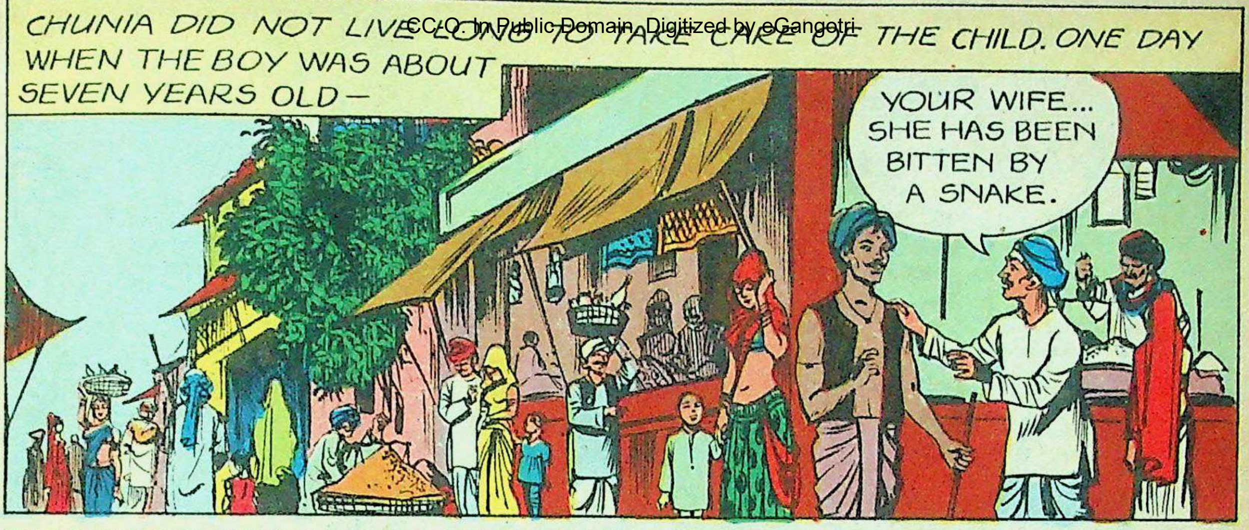
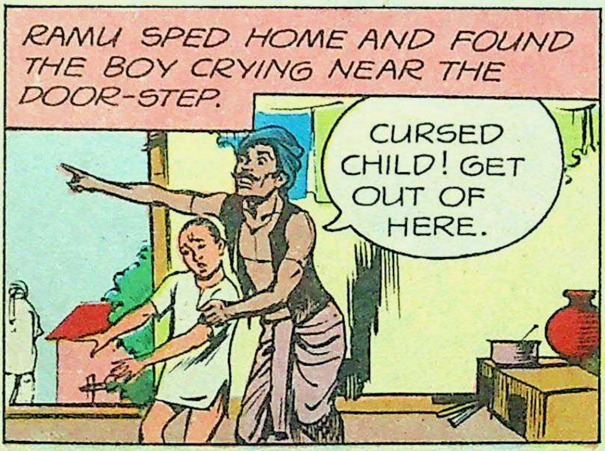
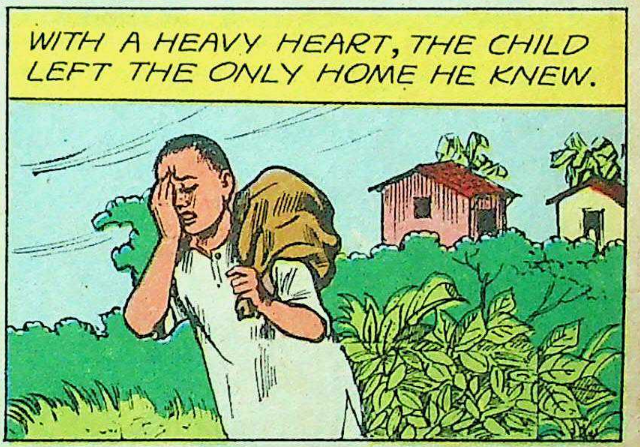
CHUNIA DID NOT LIVE LONG TO TAKE CARE OF THE CHILD. ONE DAY WHEN THE BOY WAS ABOUT SEVEN YEARS OLD—


YOUR WIFE... SHE HAS BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE.

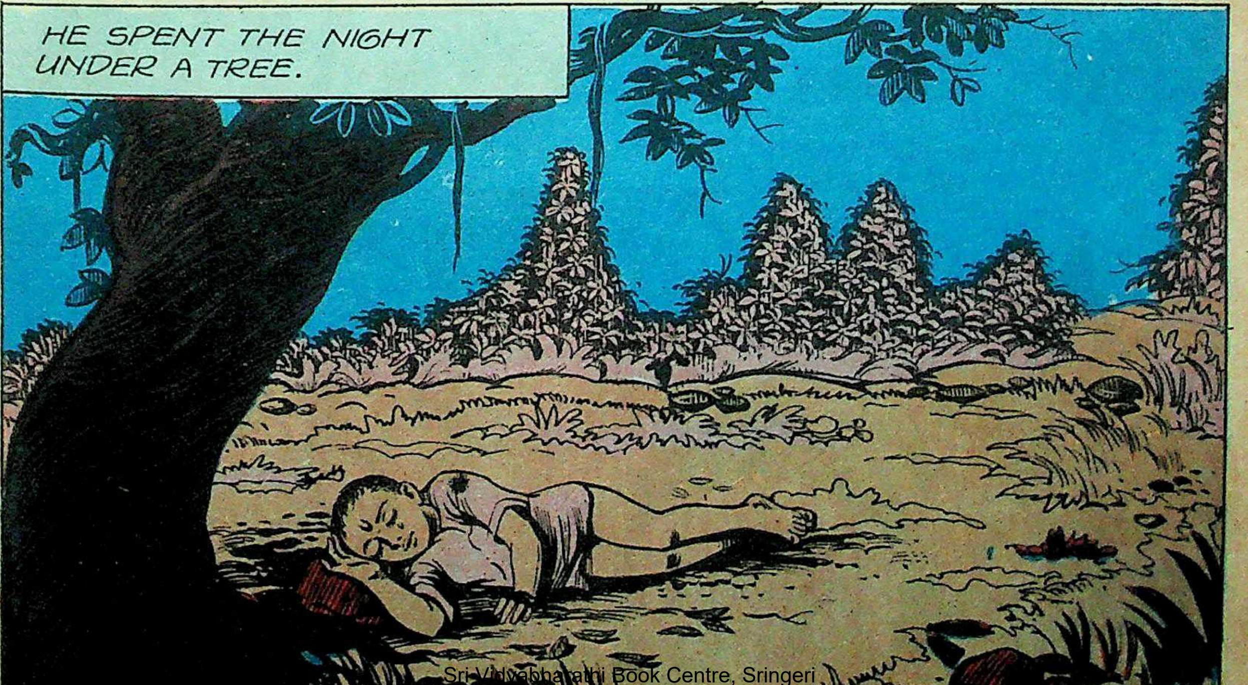
RAMU SPED HOME AND FOUND THE BOY CRYING NEAR THE DOOR-STEP.

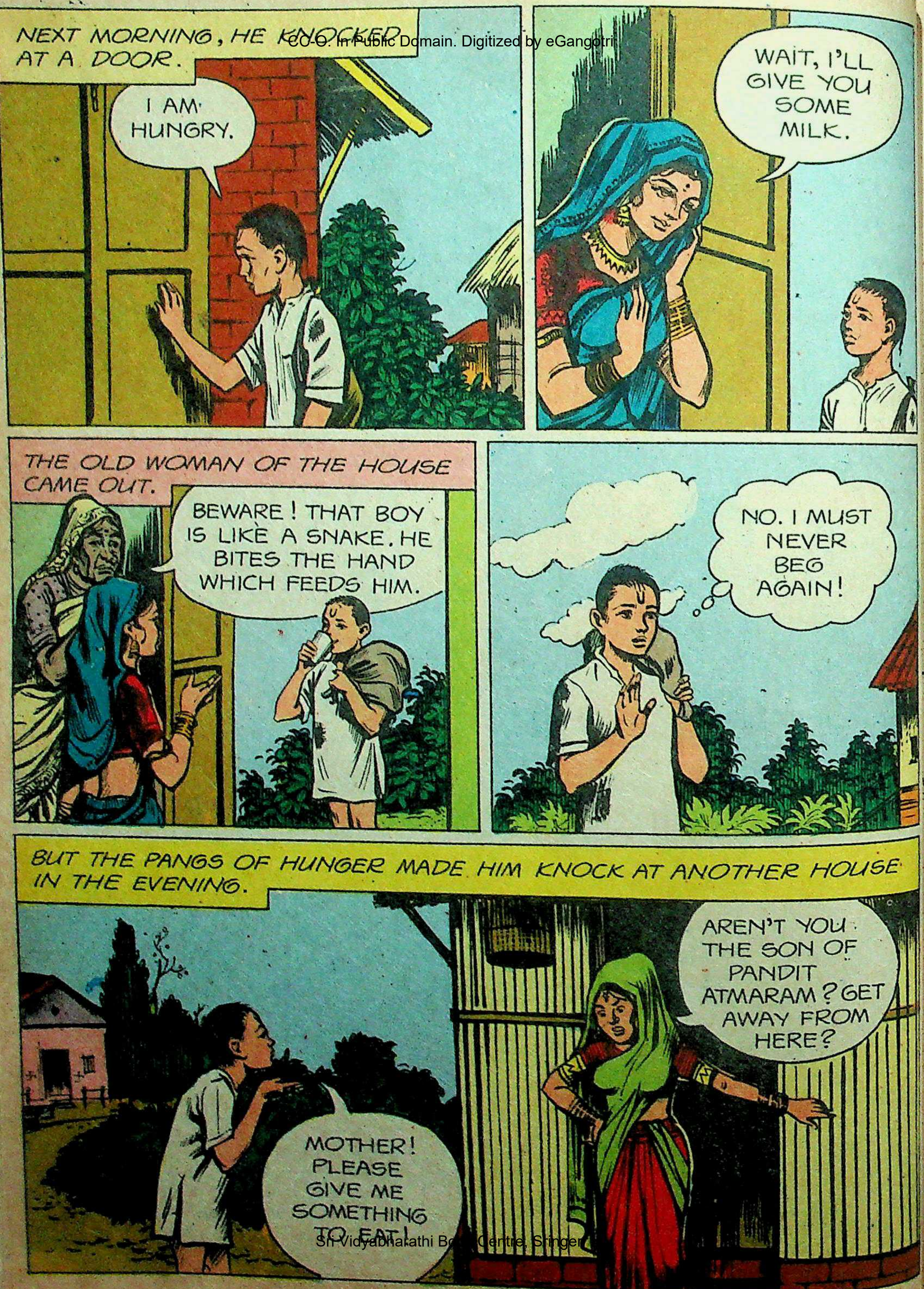

CURSED CHILD! GET OUT OF HERE.

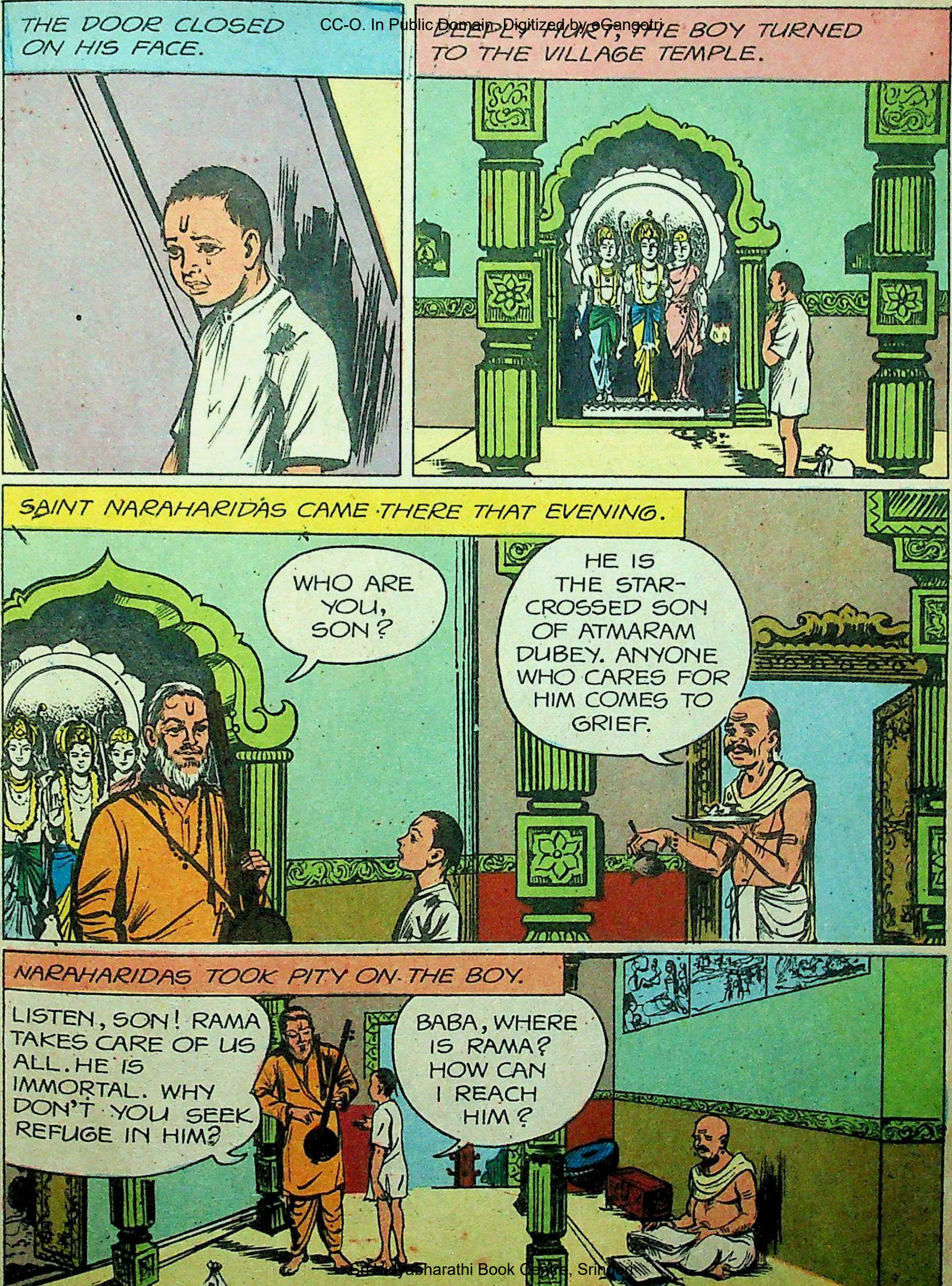
WITH A HEAVY HEART, THE CHILD LEFT THE ONLY HOME HE KNEW.

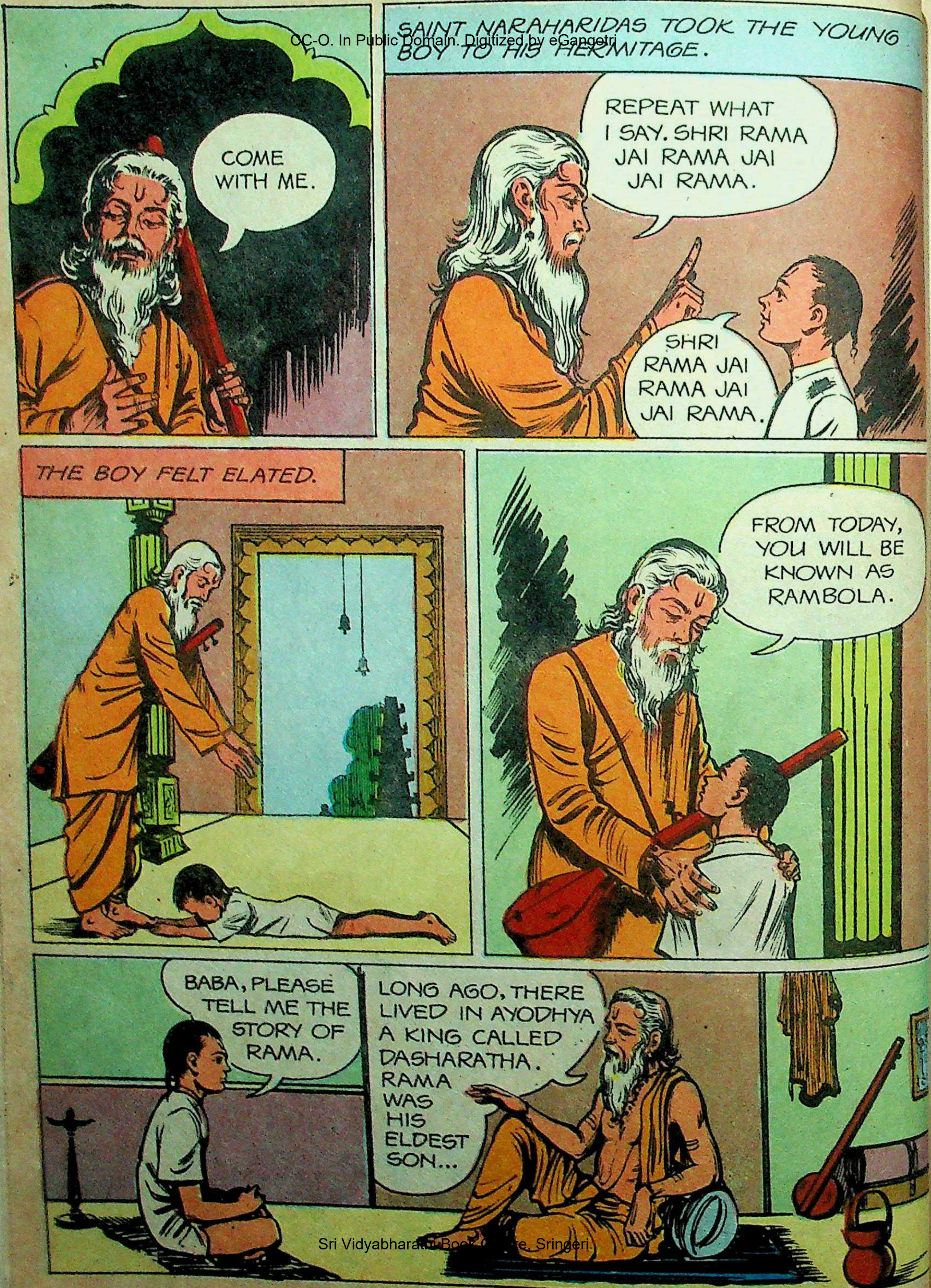


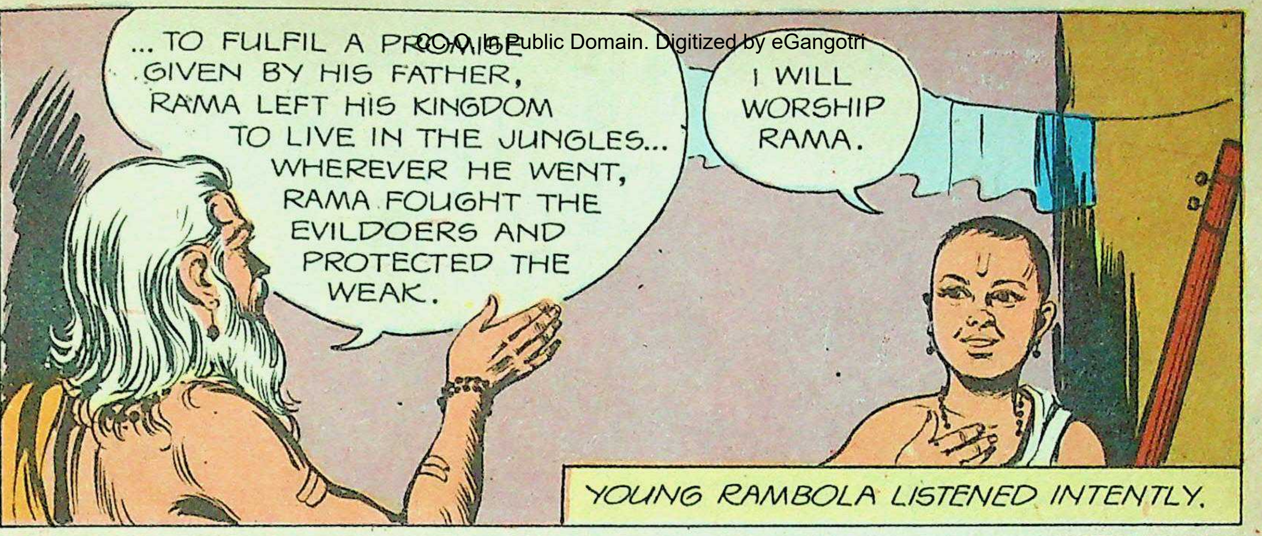
HE SPENT THE NIGHT UNDER A TREE.



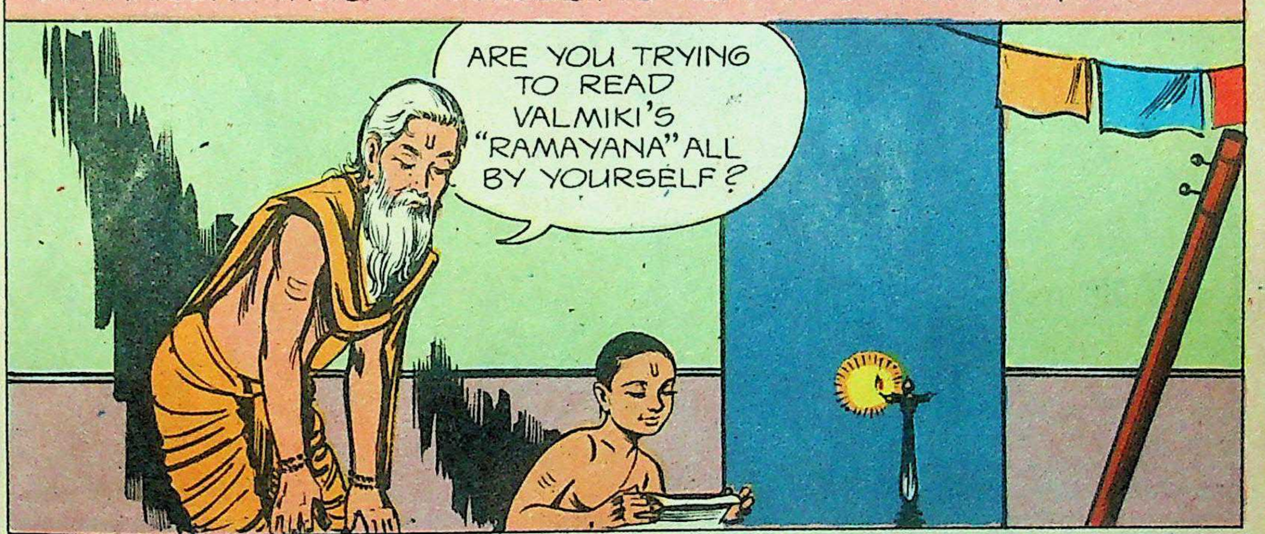

NEXT MORNING, HE KNOCKED AT A DOOR.
I AM HUNGRY.
WAIT, I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MILK.
THE OLD WOMAN OF THE HOUSE CAME OUT.
BEWARE! THAT BOY IS LIKE A SNAKE. HE BITES THE HAND WHICH FEEDS HIM.
NO. I MUST NEVER BEG AGAIN!
BUT THE PANGS OF HUNGER MADE HIM KNOCK AT ANOTHER HOUSE IN THE EVENING.
MOTHER! PLEASE GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT!
AREN'T YOU THE SON OF PANDIT ATMARAM? GET AWAY FROM HERE?

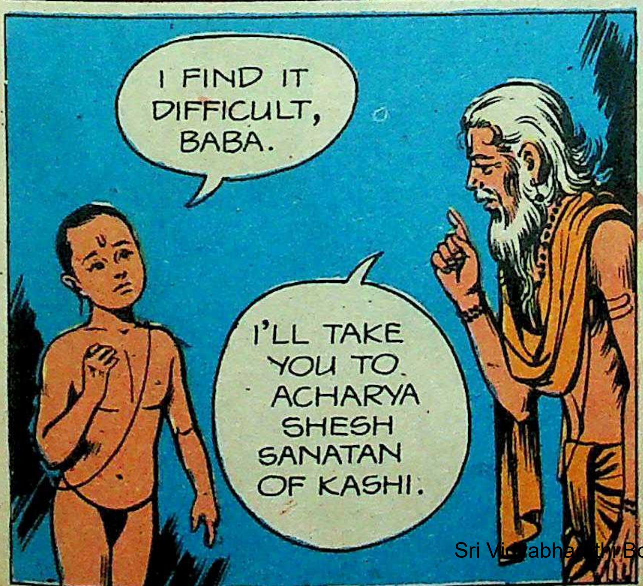

THE DOOR CLOSED ON HIS FACE.
DEEPLY HURT, THE BOY TURNED TO THE VILLAGE TEMPLE.
SAINT NARAHARIDAS CAME THERE THAT EVENING.
WHO ARE YOU, SON?
HE IS THE STAR-CROSSED SON OF ATMARAM DUBEY. ANYONE WHO CARES FOR HIM COMES TO GRIEF.
NARAHARIDAS TOOK PITY ON THE BOY.
LISTEN, SON! RAMA TAKES CARE OF US ALL. HE IS IMMORTAL. WHY DON'T YOU SEEK REFUGE IN HIM?
BABA, WHERE IS RAMA? HOW CAN I REACH HIM?

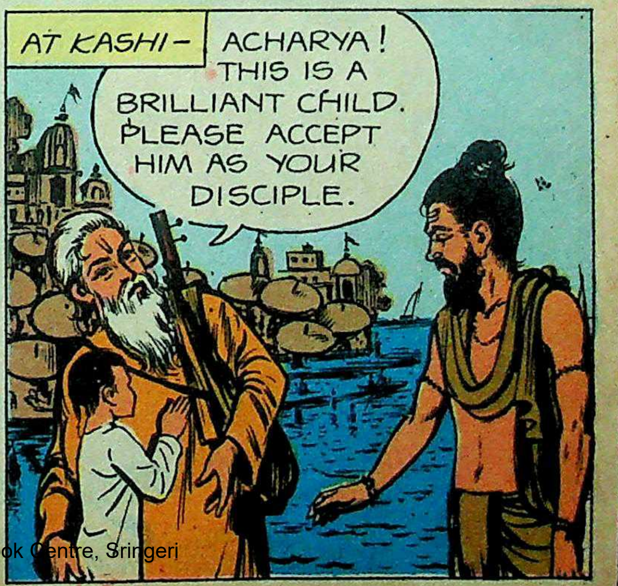

COME WITH ME.
SAINT NARAHARIDAS TOOK THE YOUNG BOY TO HIS HERMITAGE.
REPEAT WHAT I SAY. SHRI RAMA JAI RAMA JAI JAI RAMA.
SHRI RAMA JAI RAMA JAI JAI RAMA.
THE BOY FELT ELATED.
FROM TODAY, YOU WILL BE KNOWN AS RAMBOLA.
BABA, PLEASE TELL ME THE STORY OF RAMA.
LONG AGO, THERE LIVED IN AYODHYA A KING CALLED DASHARATHA. RAMA WAS HIS ELDEST SON...


... TO FULFIL A PROMISE GIVEN BY HIS FATHER, RAMA LEFT HIS KINGDOM TO LIVE IN THE JUNGLES... WHEREVER HE WENT, RAMA FOUGHT THE EVILDOERS AND PROTECTED THE WEAK.
I WILL WORSHIP RAMA.
YOUNG RAMBOLA LISTENED INTENTLY.

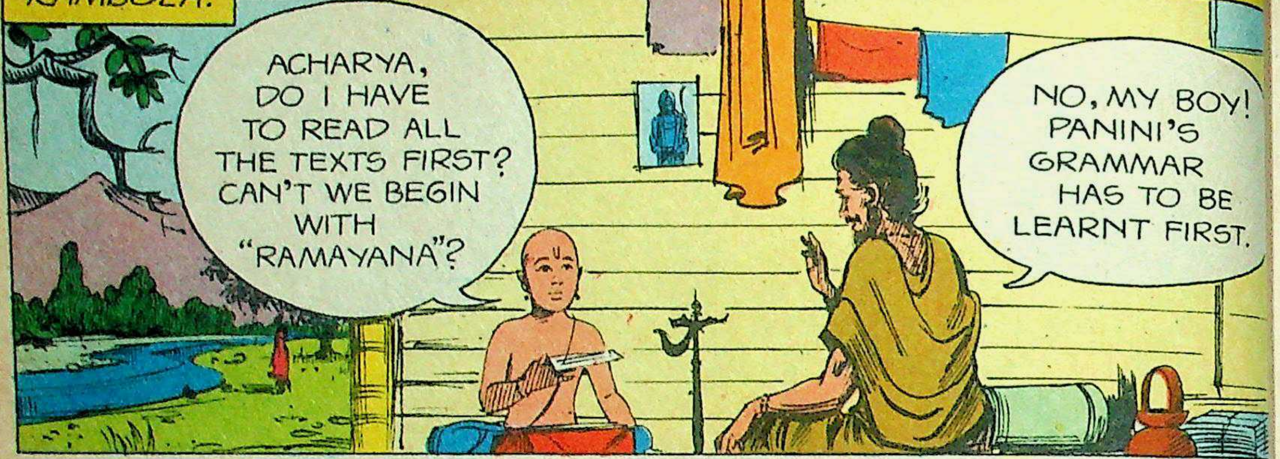
NARAHARIDAS TAUGHT RAMBOLA TO READ AND WRITE. ONE DAY—


ARE YOU TRYING TO READ VALMIKI'S "RAMAYANA" ALL BY YOURSELF?

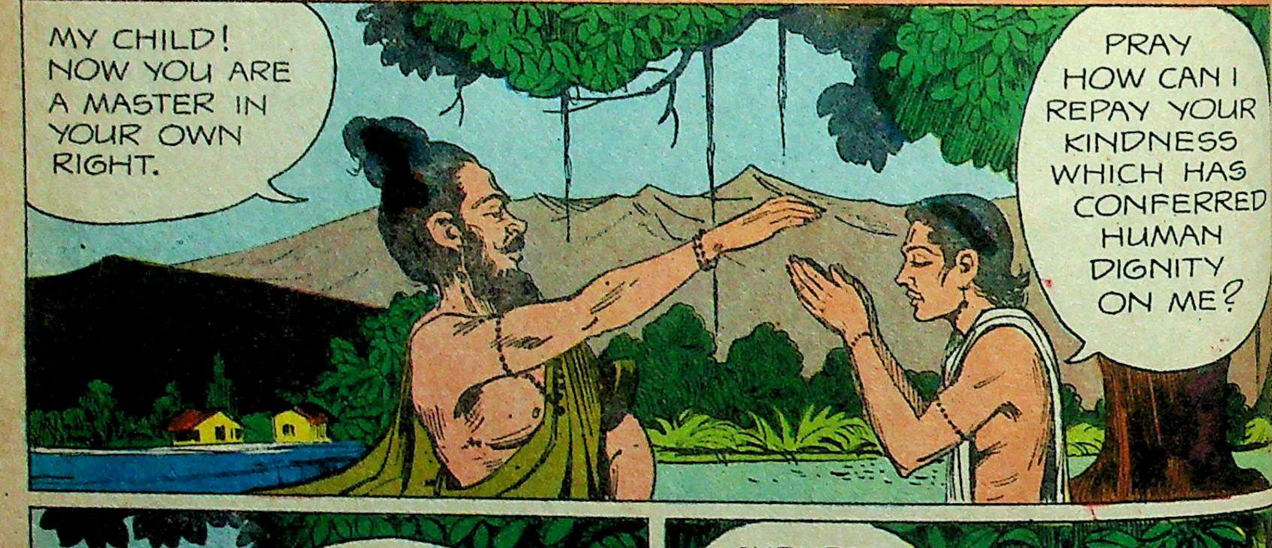

I FIND IT DIFFICULT, BABA.
I'LL TAKE YOU TO ACHARYA SHESH SANATAN OF KASHI.

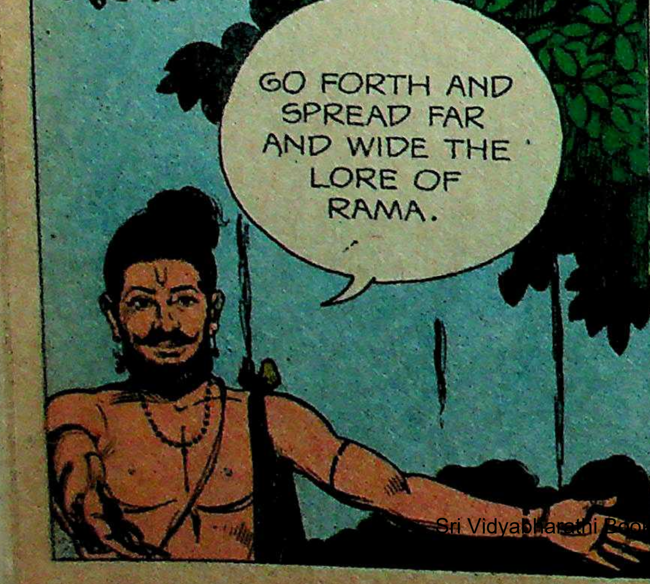

AT KASHI—
ACHARYA! THIS IS A BRILLIANT CHILD. PLEASE ACCEPT HIM AS YOUR DISCIPLE.

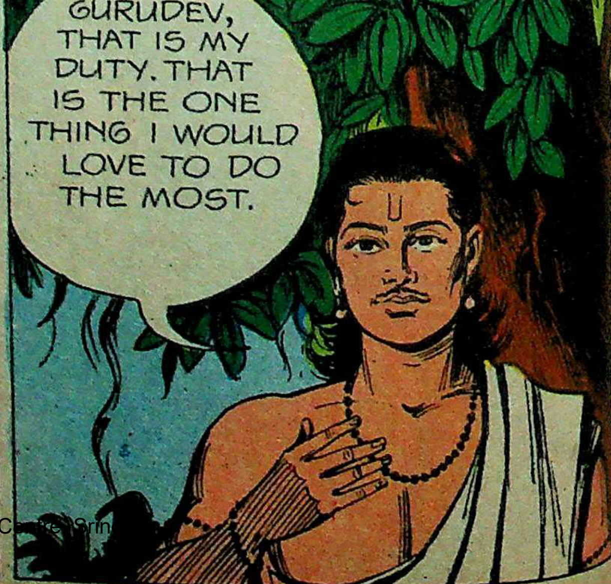
ACHARYA SHESH SANATAN TOOK KEEN INTEREST IN TEACHING RAMBOLA.


ACHARYA, DO I HAVE TO READ ALL THE TEXTS FIRST? CAN'T WE BEGIN WITH "RAMAYANA"?
NO, MY BOY! PANINI'S GRAMMAR HAS TO BE LEARNT FIRST.

YEARS ROLLED BY. RAMBOLA LEARNT THE VEDAS AND OTHER HOLY SCRIPTURES. ONE DAY—


MY CHILD! NOW YOU ARE A MASTER IN YOUR OWN RIGHT.
PRAY HOW CAN I REPAY YOUR KINDNESS WHICH HAS CONFERRED HUMAN DIGNITY ON ME?


GO FORTH AND SPREAD FAR AND WIDE THE LORE OF RAMA.


GURUDEV, THAT IS MY DUTY. THAT IS THE ONE THING I WOULD LOVE TO DO THE MOST.

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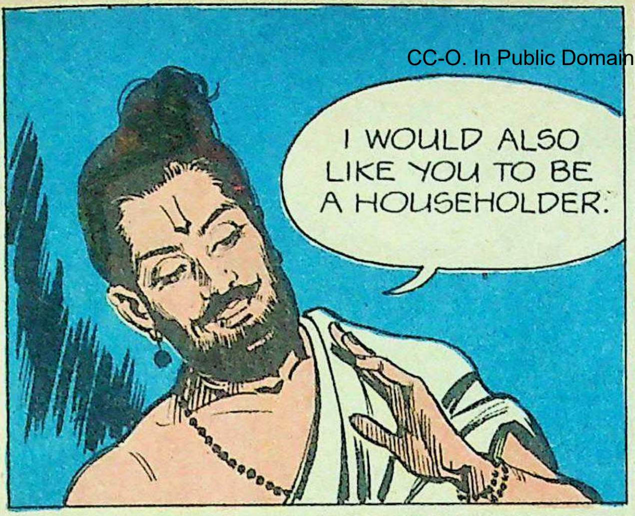
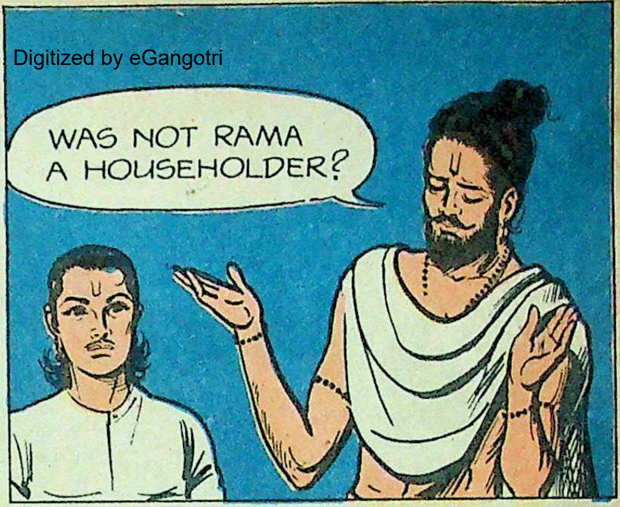
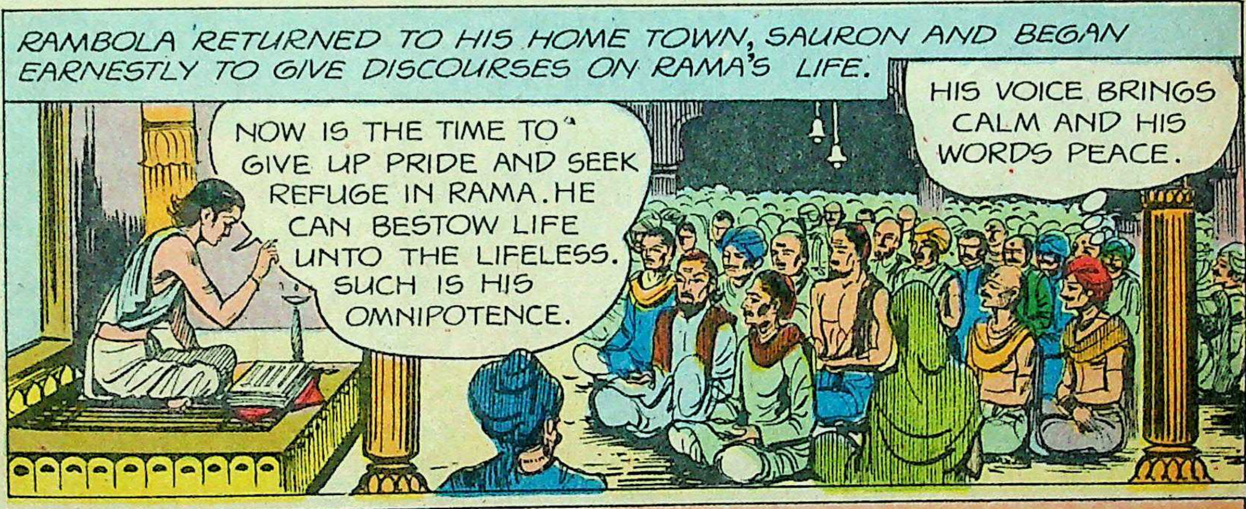
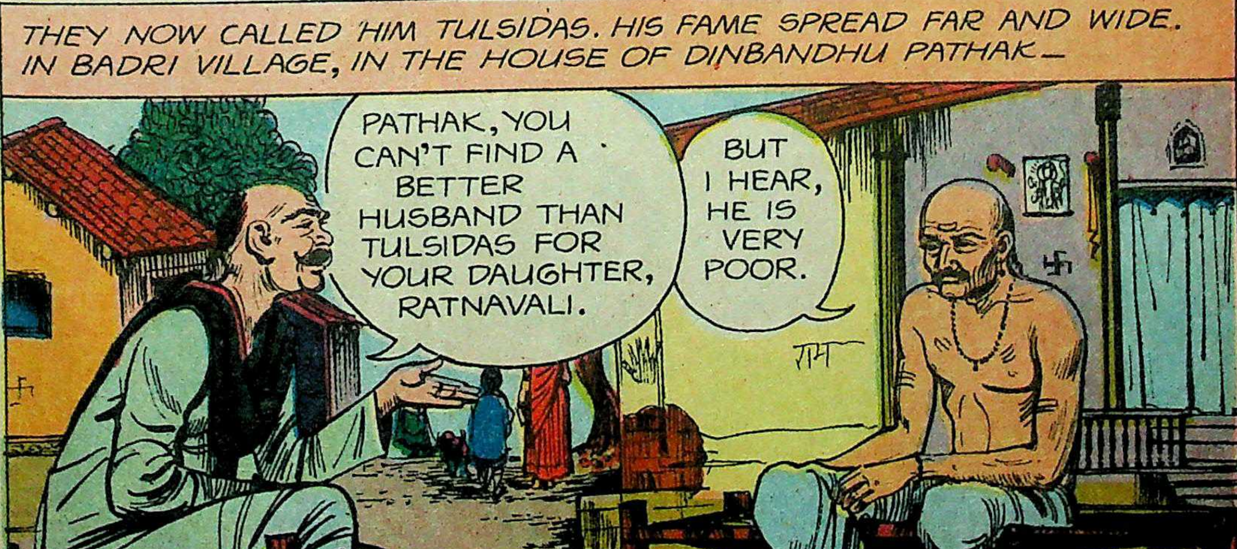

I WOULD ALSO LIKE YOU TO BE A HOUSEHOLDER.

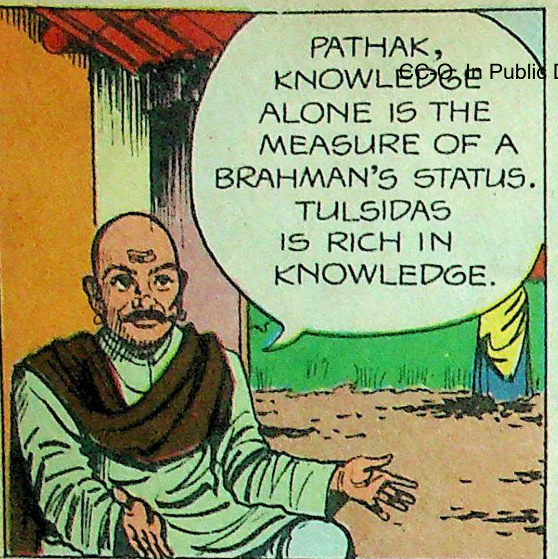

WAS NOT RAMA A HOUSEHOLDER?

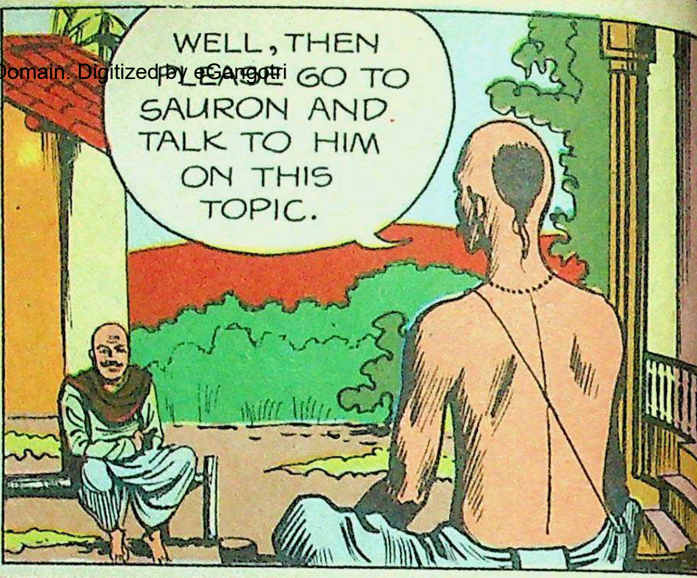

RAMBOLA RETURNED TO HIS HOME TOWN, SAURON AND BEGAN EARNESTLY TO GIVE DISCOURSES ON RAMA'S LIFE.

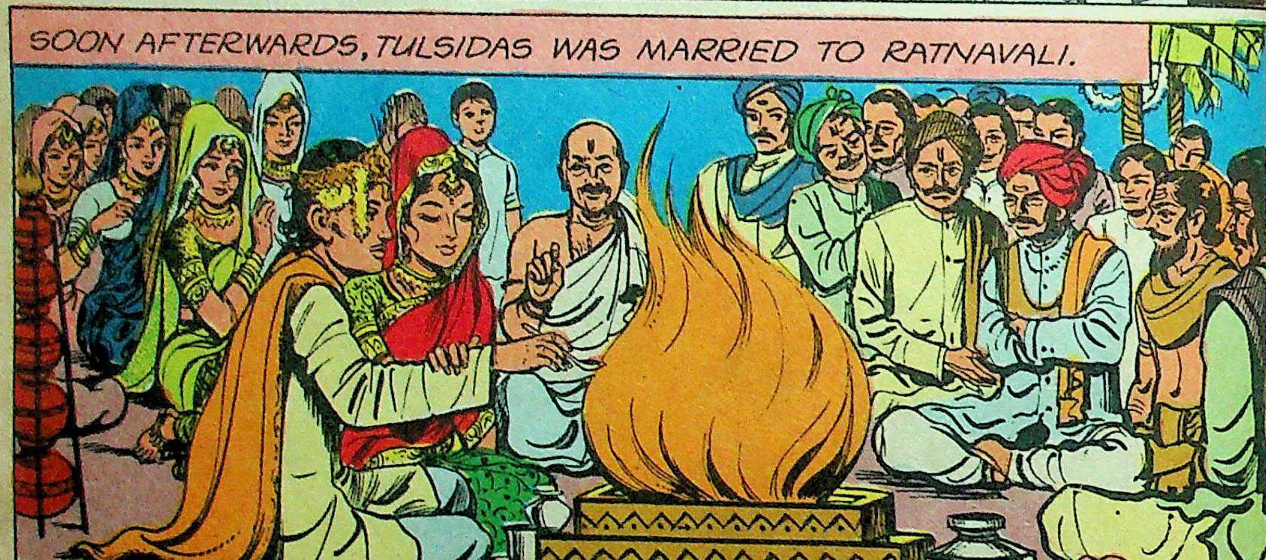
NOW IS THE TIME TO GIVE UP PRIDE AND SEEK REFUGE IN RAMA. HE CAN BESTOW LIFE UNTO THE LIFELESS. SUCH IS HIS OMNIPOTENCE.
HIS VOICE BRINGS CALM AND HIS WORDS PEACE.

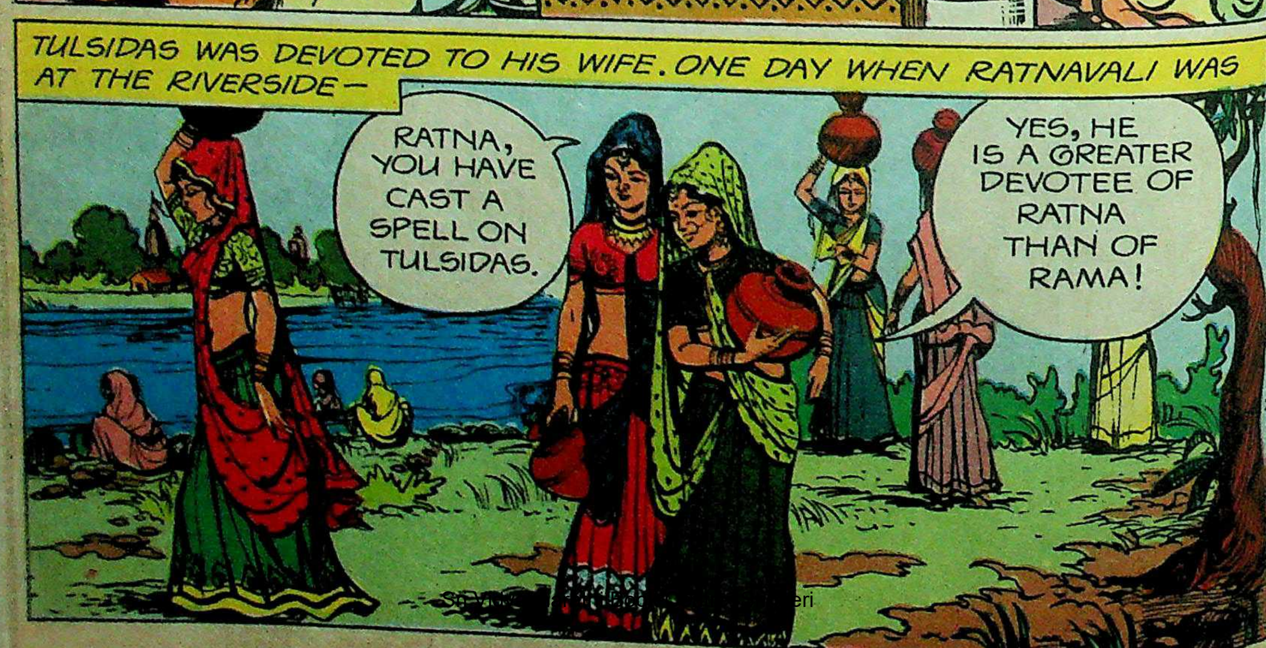

THEY NOW CALLED HIM TULSIDAS. HIS FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. IN BADRI VILLAGE, IN THE HOUSE OF DINBANDHU PATHAK—

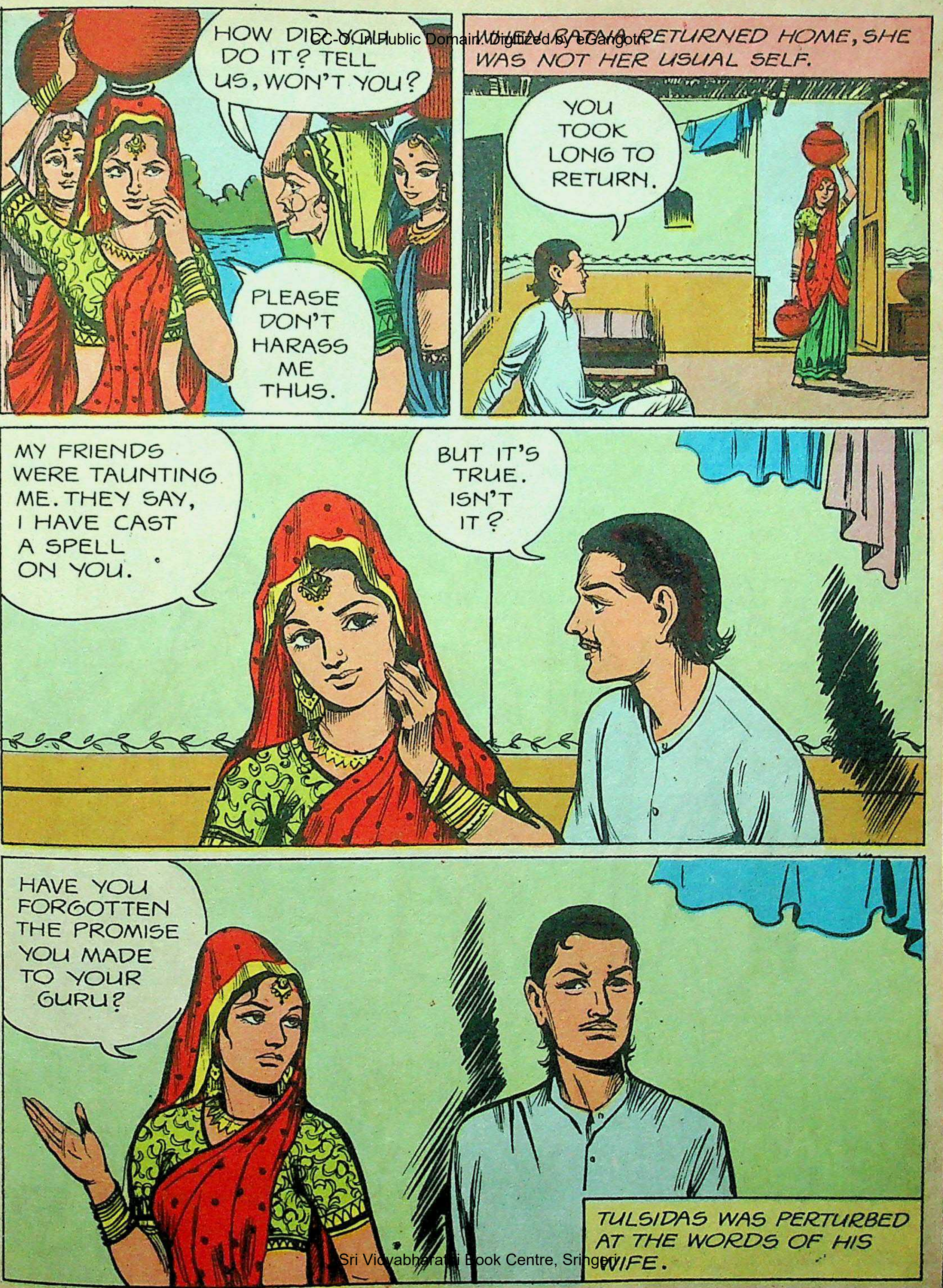
PATHAK, YOU CAN'T FIND A BETTER HUSBAND THAN TULSIDAS FOR YOUR DAUGHTER, RATNAVALI.
BUT I HEAR, HE IS VERY POOR.


PATHAK, KNOWLEDGE ALONE IS THE MEASURE OF A BRAHMAN'S STATUS. TULSIDAS IS RICH IN KNOWLEDGE.


WELL, THEN PLEASE GO TO SAURON AND TALK TO HIM ON THIS TOPIC.


SOON AFTERWARDS, TULSIDAS WAS MARRIED TO RATNAVALI.


TULSIDAS WAS DEVOTED TO HIS WIFE. ONE DAY WHEN RATNAVALI WAS AT THE RIVERSIDE—
RATNA, YOU HAVE CAST A SPELL ON TULSIDAS.
YES, HE IS A GREATER DEVOTEE OF RATNA THAN OF RAMA!


HOW DID YOU DO IT? TELL US, WON'T YOU?
PLEASE DON'T HARASS ME THUS.
WHEN RATNA RETURNED HOME, SHE WAS NOT HER USUAL SELF.
YOU TOOK LONG TO RETURN.
MY FRIENDS WERE TAUNTING ME. THEY SAY, I HAVE CAST A SPELL ON YOU.
BUT IT'S TRUE. ISN'T IT?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE PROMISE YOU MADE TO YOUR GURU?
TULSIDAS WAS PERTURBED AT THE WORDS OF HIS WIFE.

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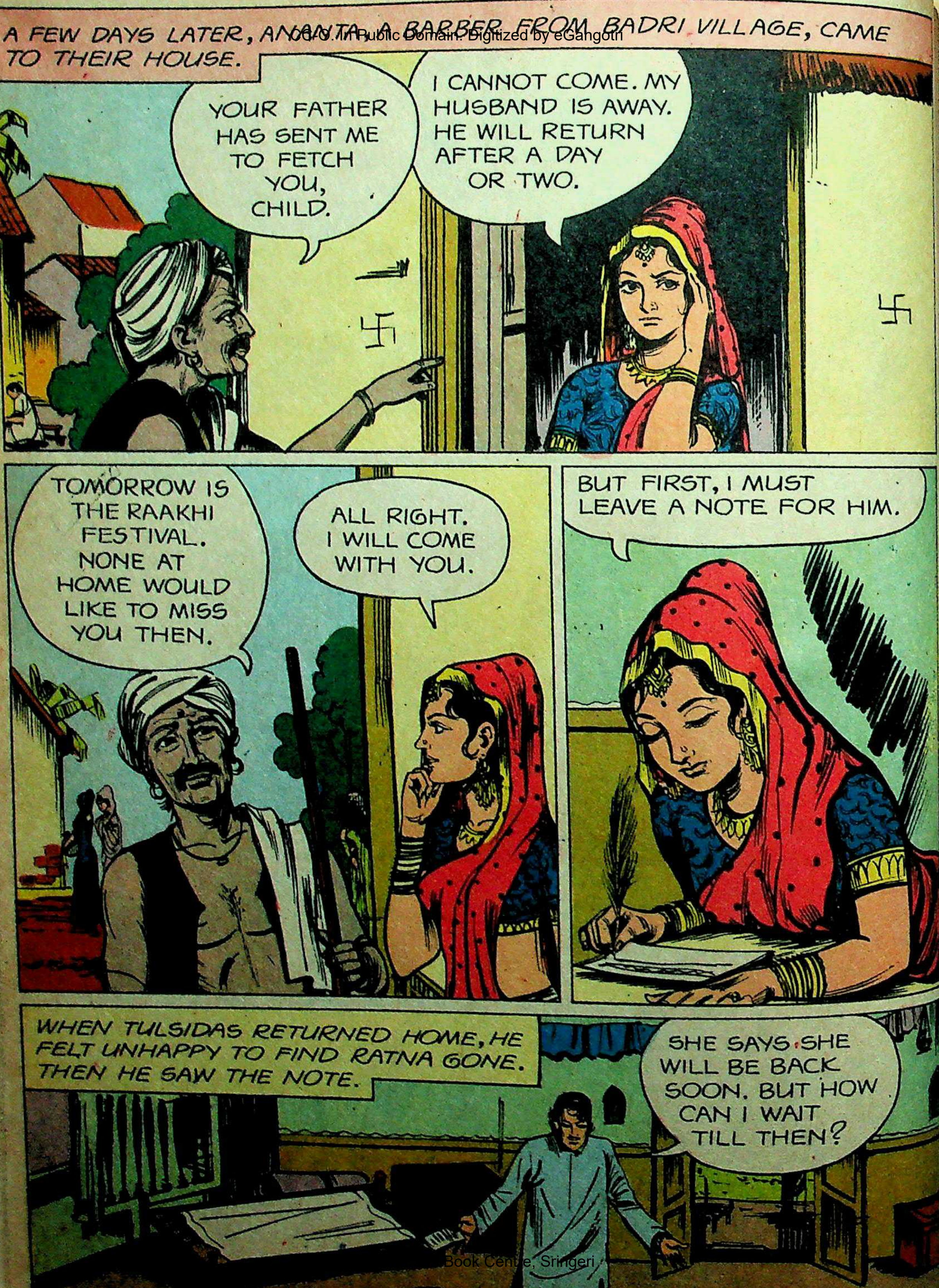
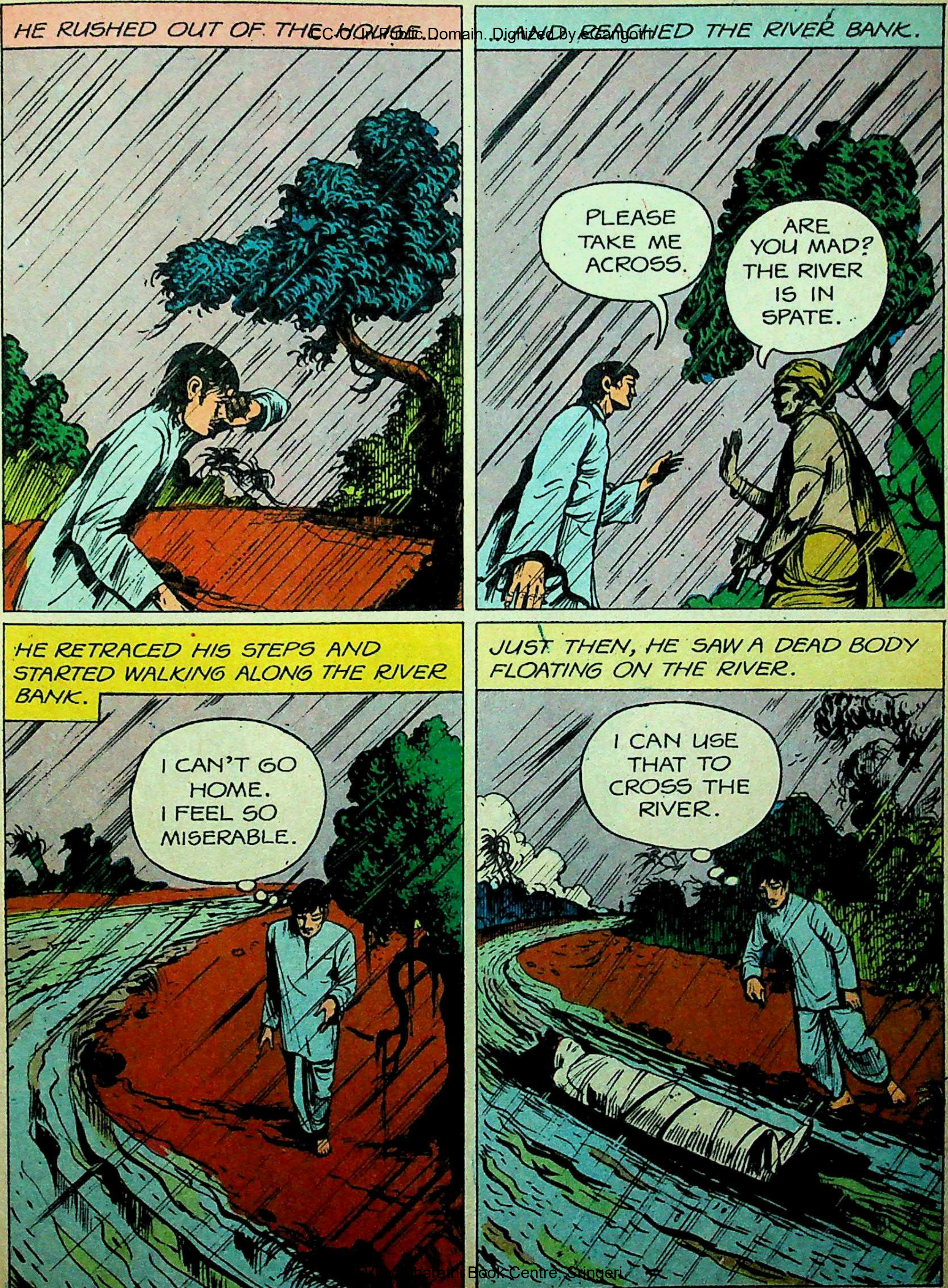

A FEW DAYS LATER, ANANTA, A BARBER FROM BADRI VILLAGE, CAME TO THEIR HOUSE.
YOUR FATHER HAS SENT ME TO FETCH YOU, CHILD.
I CANNOT COME. MY HUSBAND IS AWAY. HE WILL RETURN AFTER A DAY OR TWO.
TOMORROW IS THE RAAKHI FESTIVAL. NONE AT HOME WOULD LIKE TO MISS YOU THEN.
ALL RIGHT. I WILL COME WITH YOU.
BUT FIRST, I MUST LEAVE A NOTE FOR HIM.
WHEN TULSIDAS RETURNED HOME, HE FELT UNHAPPY TO FIND RATNA GONE. THEN HE SAW THE NOTE.
SHE SAYS SHE WILL BE BACK SOON. BUT HOW CAN I WAIT TILL THEN?


HE RUSHED OUT OF THE HOUSE ...
... AND REACHED THE RIVER BANK.
PLEASE TAKE ME ACROSS.
ARE YOU MAD? THE RIVER IS IN SPATE.
HE RETRACED HIS STEPS AND STARTED WALKING ALONG THE RIVER BANK.
I CAN'T GO HOME. I FEEL SO MISERABLE.
JUST THEN, HE SAW A DEAD BODY FLOATING ON THE RIVER.
I CAN USE THAT TO CROSS THE RIVER.

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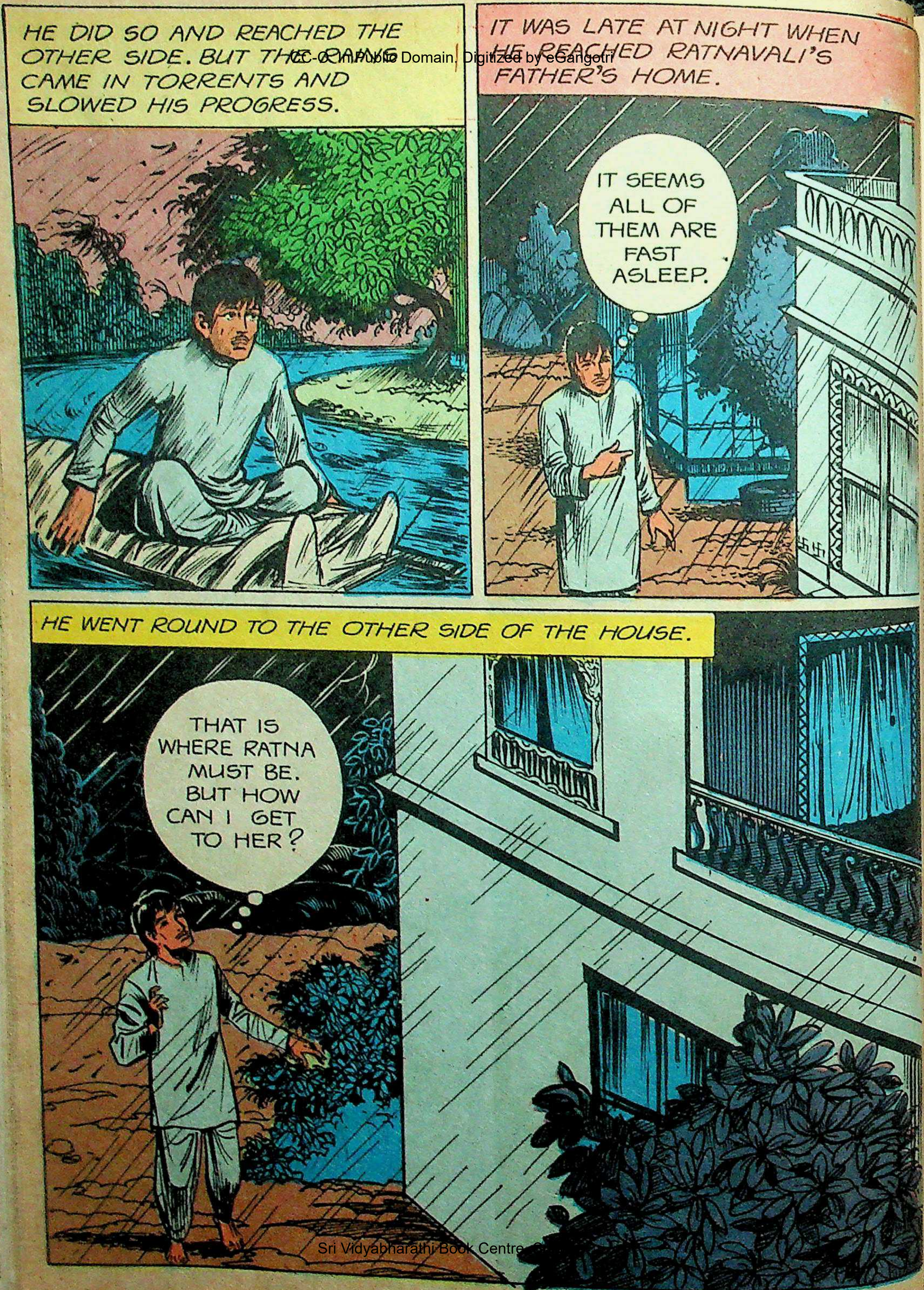
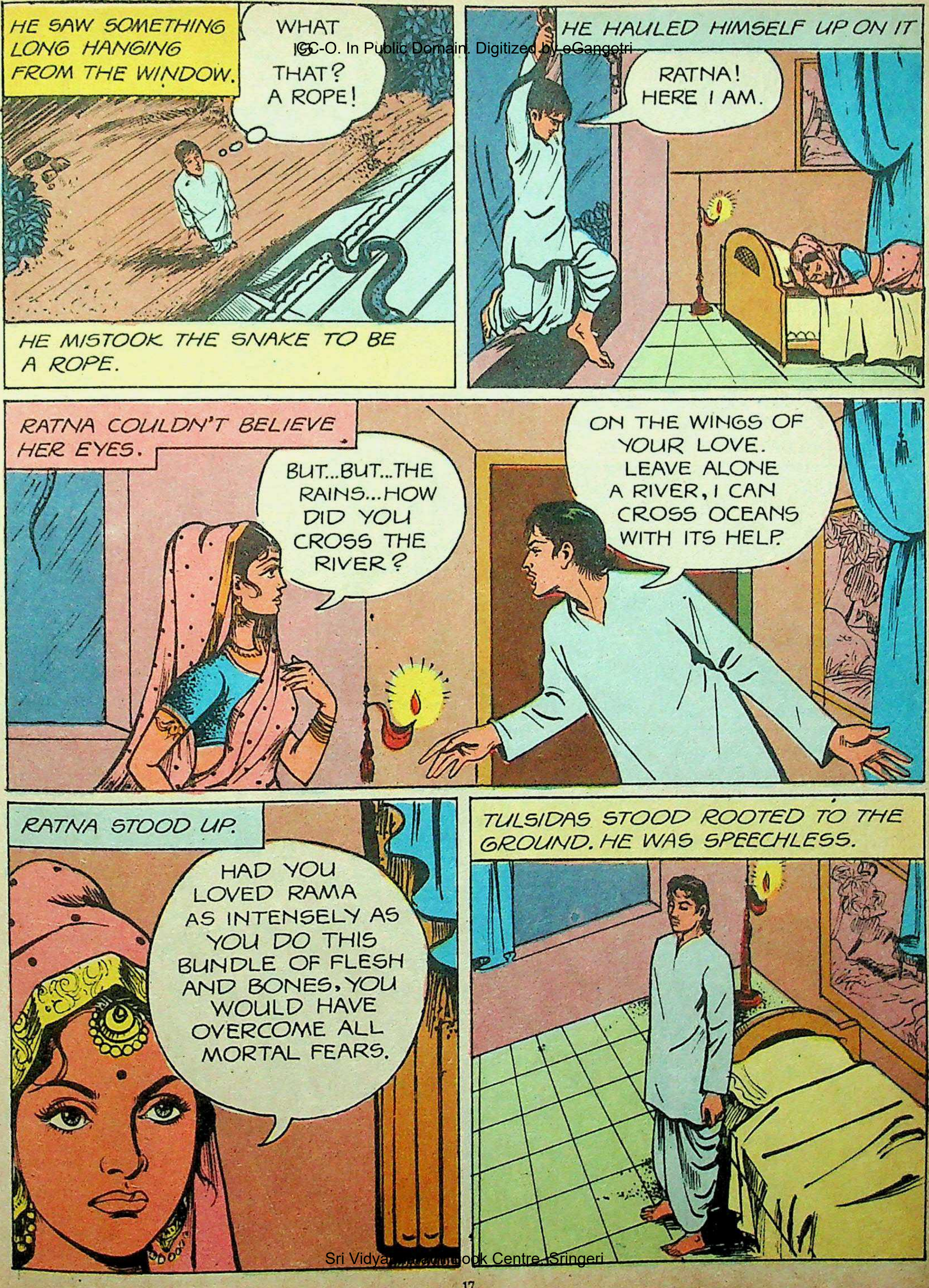

HE DID SO AND REACHED THE OTHER SIDE. BUT THE RAINS CAME IN TORRENTS AND SLOWED HIS PROGRESS.
IT WAS LATE AT NIGHT WHEN HE REACHED RATNAVALI'S FATHER'S HOME.
IT SEEMS ALL OF THEM ARE FAST ASLEEP.
HE WENT ROUND TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HOUSE.
THAT IS WHERE RATNA MUST BE. BUT HOW CAN I GET TO HER?


HE SAW SOMETHING LONG HANGING FROM THE WINDOW.
WHAT IS THAT? A ROPE!
HE MISTOOK THE SNAKE TO BE A ROPE.
HE HAULED HIMSELF UP ON IT
RATNA! HERE I AM.
RATNA COULDN'T BELIEVE HER EYES.
BUT...BUT...THE RAINS...HOW DID YOU CROSS THE RIVER?
ON THE WINGS OF YOUR LOVE. LEAVE ALONE A RIVER, I CAN CROSS OCEANS WITH ITS HELP.
RATNA STOOD UP.
HAD YOU LOVED RAMA AS INTENSELY AS YOU DO THIS BUNDLE OF FLESH AND BONES, YOU WOULD HAVE OVERCOME ALL MORTAL FEARS.
TULSIDAS STOOD ROOTED TO THE GROUND. HE WAS SPEECHLESS.

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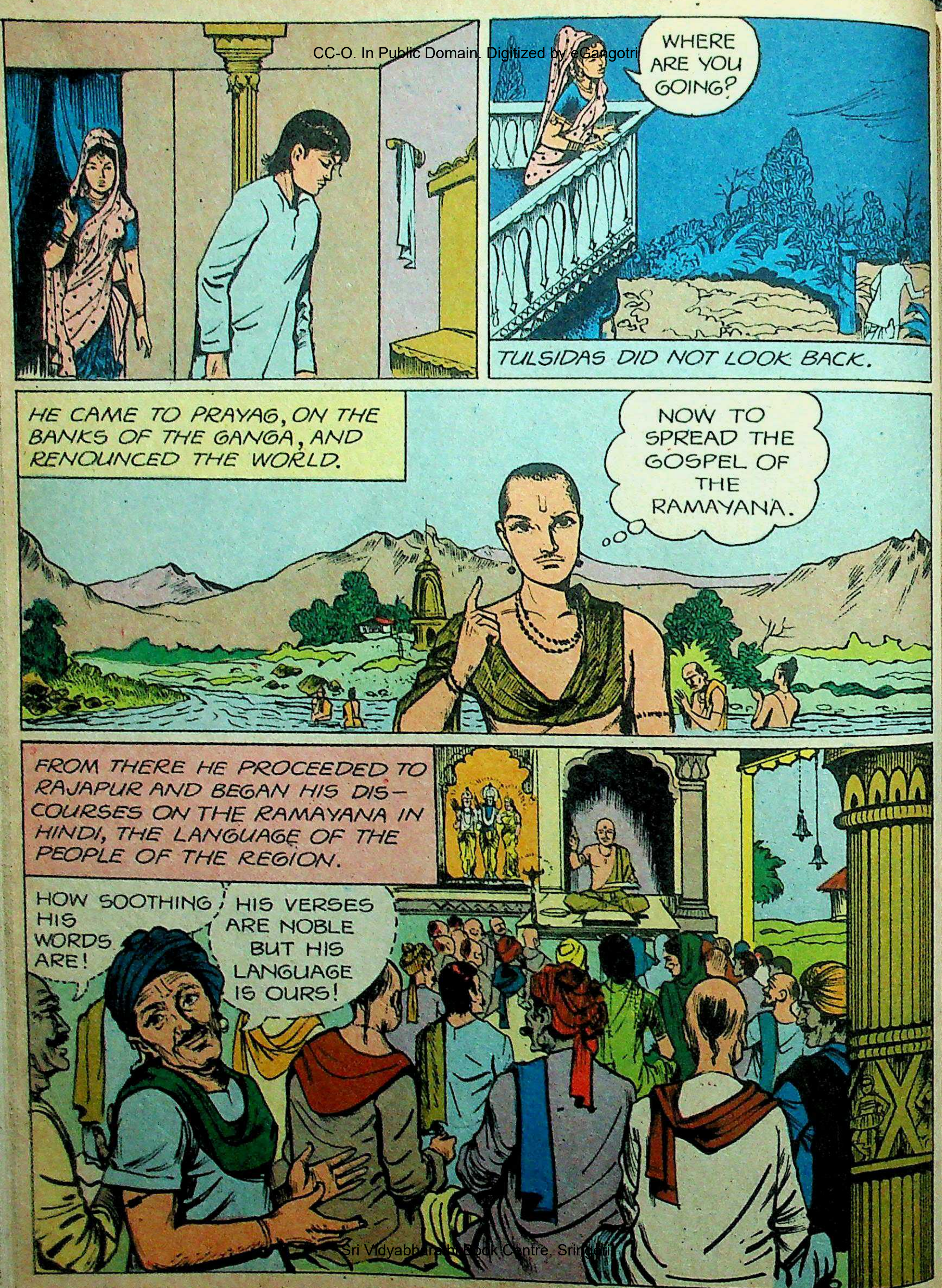
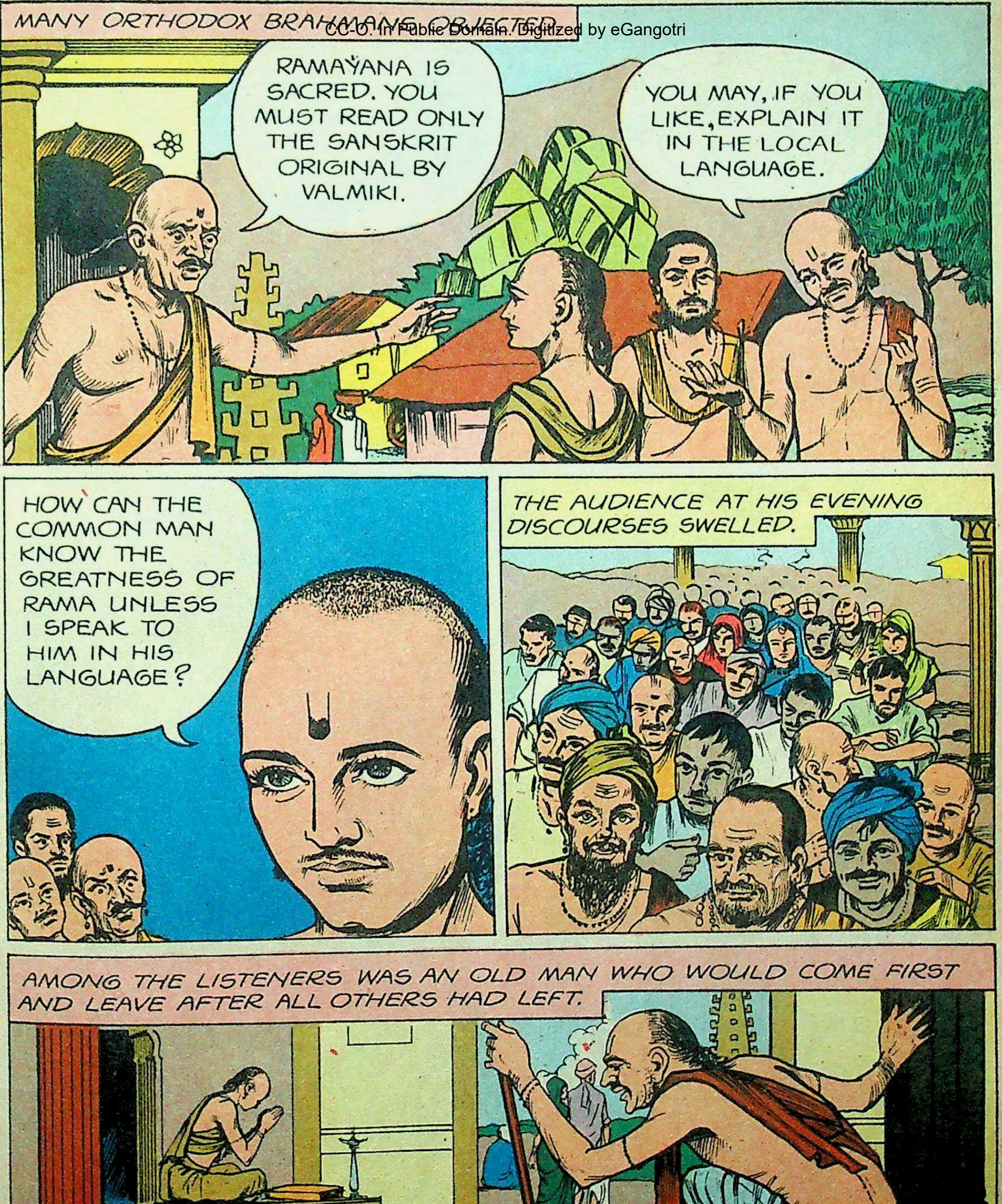
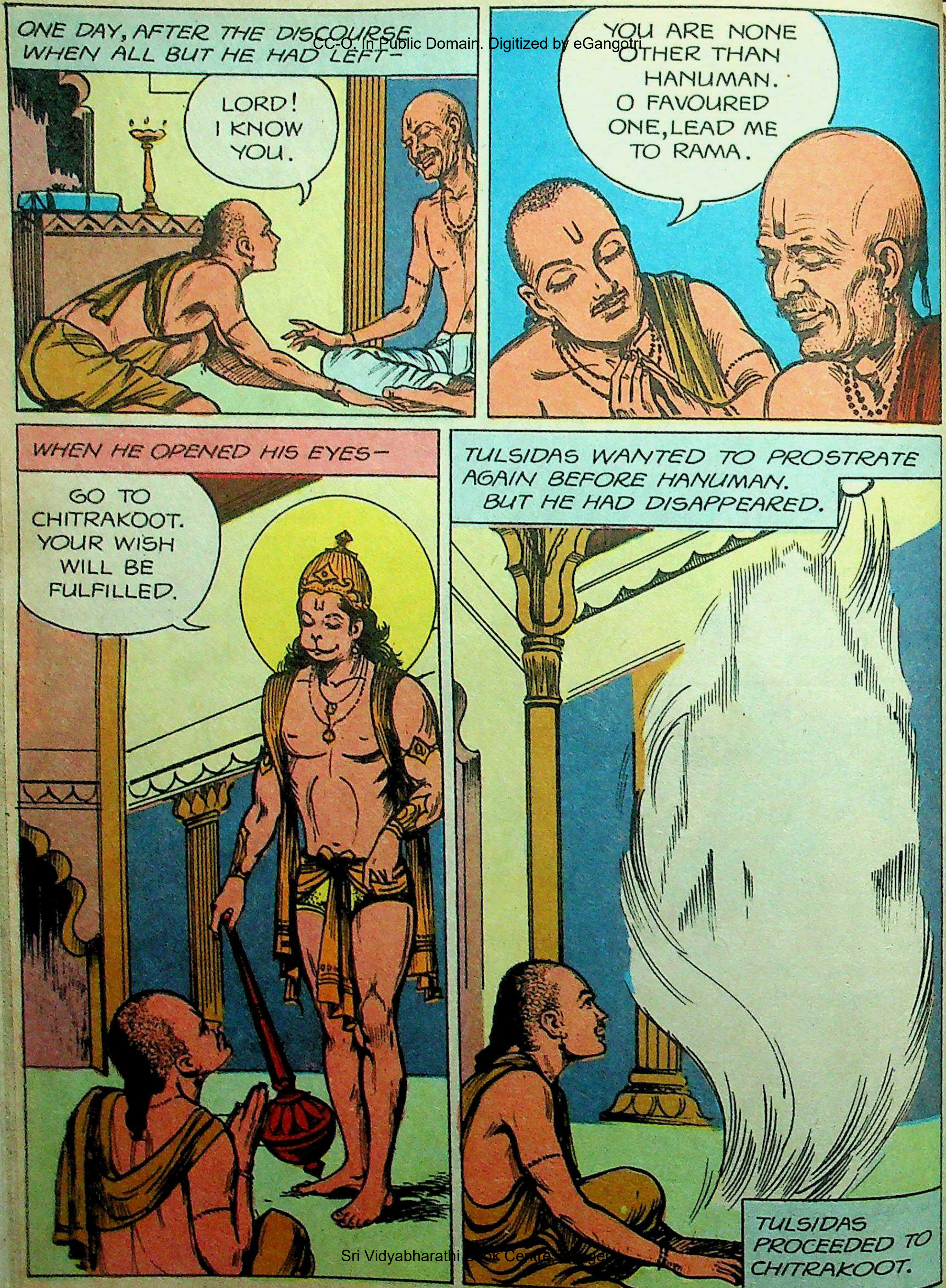
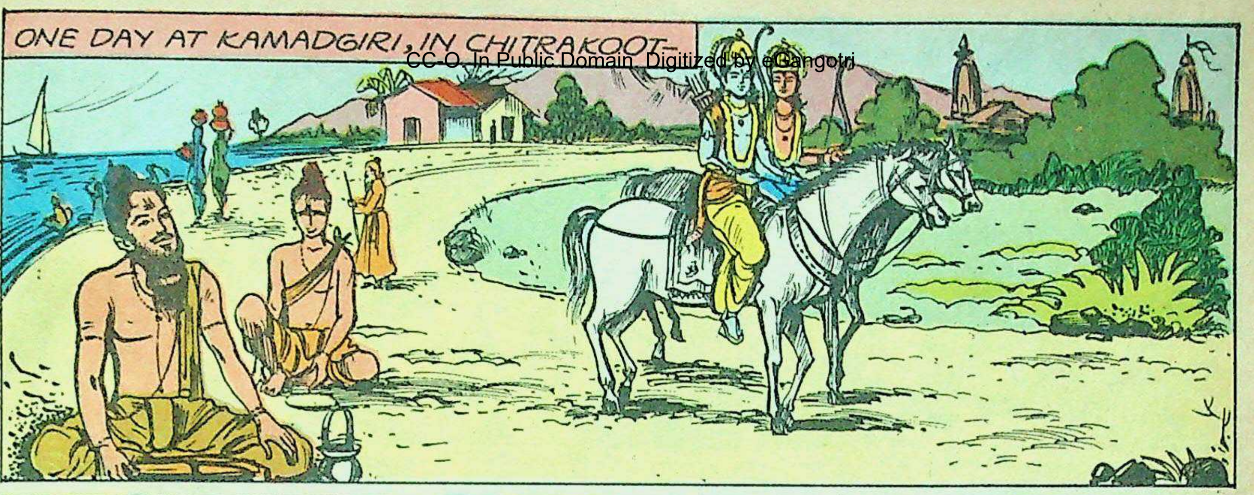
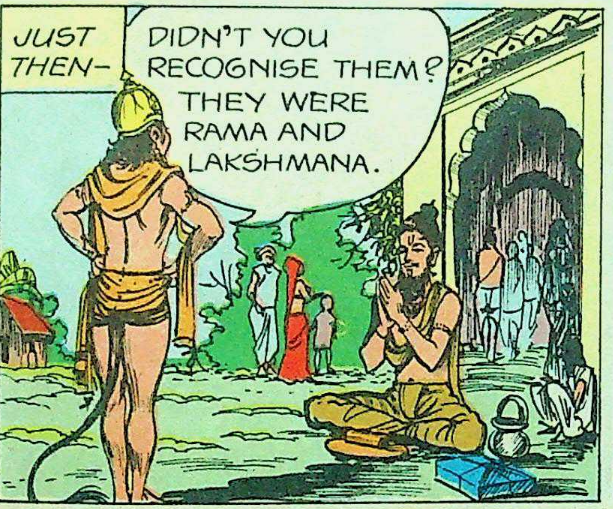
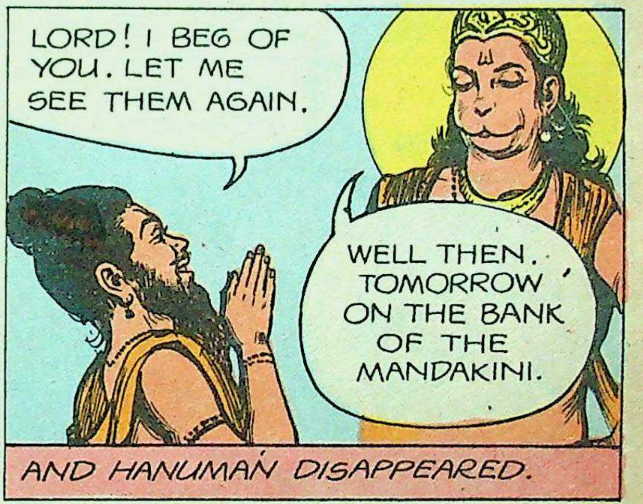

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
TULSIDAS DID NOT LOOK BACK.
HE CAME TO PRAYAG, ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGA, AND RENOUNCED THE WORLD.
NOW TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL OF THE RAMAYANA.
FROM THERE HE PROCEEDED TO RAJAPUR AND BEGAN HIS DISCOURSES ON THE RAMAYANA IN HINDI, THE LANGUAGE OF THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION.
HOW SOOTHING HIS WORDS ARE!
HIS VERSES ARE NOBLE BUT HIS LANGUAGE IS OURS!

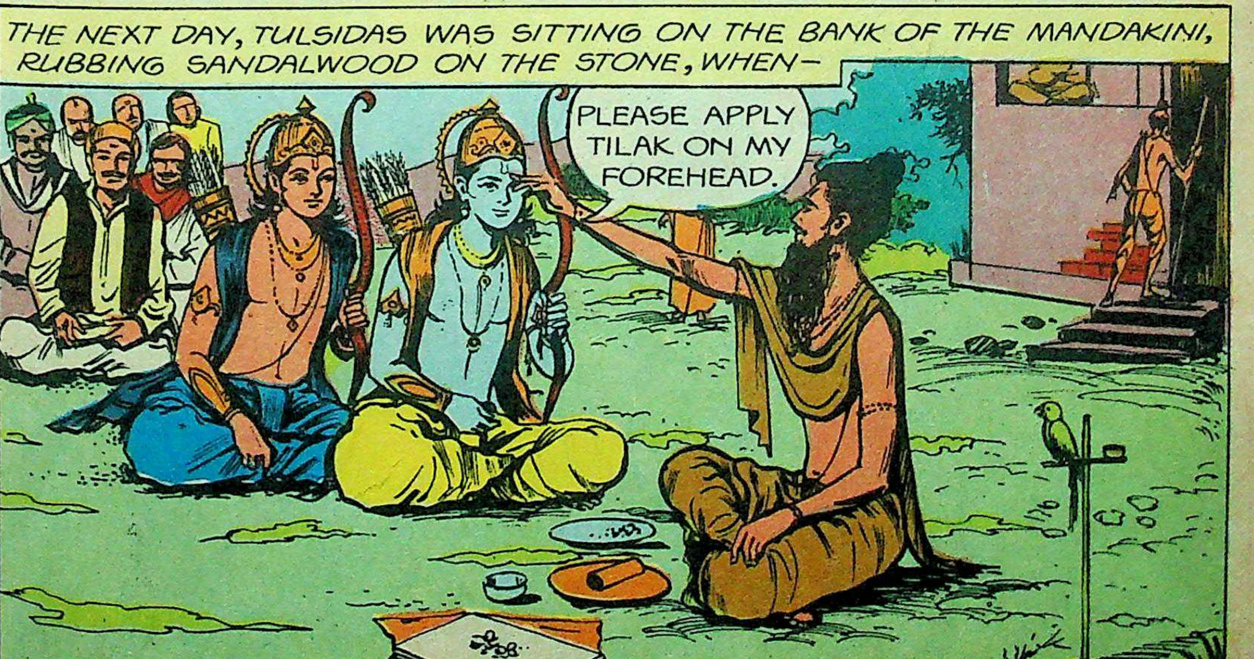

MANY ORTHODOX BRAHMANS OBJECTED.
RAMAYANA IS SACRED. YOU MUST READ ONLY THE SANSKRIT ORIGINAL BY VALMIKI.
YOU MAY, IF YOU LIKE, EXPLAIN IT IN THE LOCAL LANGUAGE.
HOW CAN THE COMMON MAN KNOW THE GREATNESS OF RAMA UNLESS I SPEAK TO HIM IN HIS LANGUAGE?
THE AUDIENCE AT HIS EVENING DISCOURSES SWELLED.
AMONG THE LISTENERS WAS AN OLD MAN WHO WOULD COME FIRST AND LEAVE AFTER ALL OTHERS HAD LEFT.

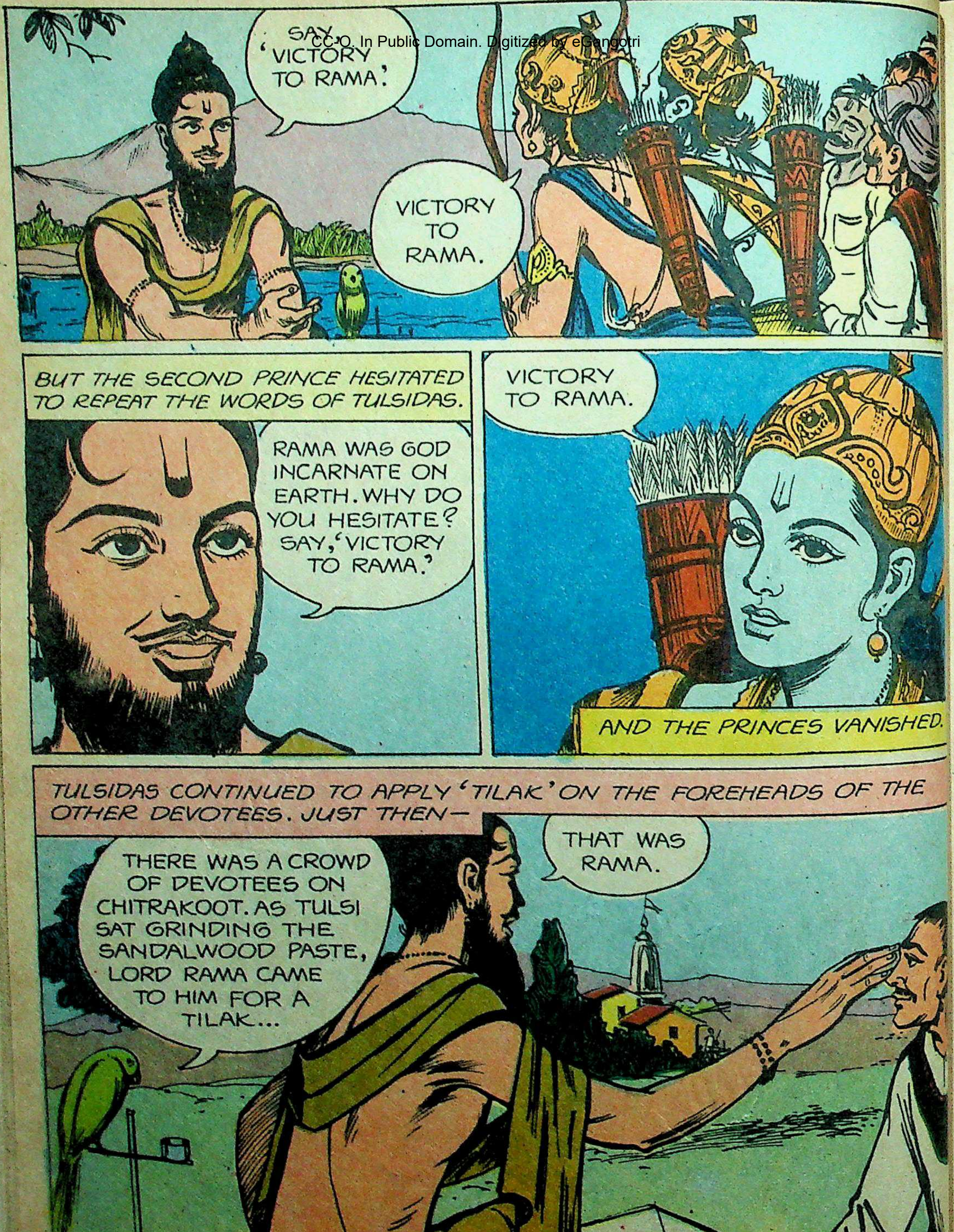

ONE DAY, AFTER THE DISCOURSE WHEN ALL BUT HE HAD LEFT—
LORD! I KNOW YOU.
YOU ARE NONE OTHER THAN HANUMAN. O FAVOURED ONE, LEAD ME TO RAMA.
WHEN HE OPENED HIS EYES—
GO TO CHITRAKOOT. YOUR WISH WILL BE FULFILLED.
TULSIDAS WANTED TO PROSTRATE AGAIN BEFORE HANUMAN. BUT HE HAD DISAPPEARED.
TULSIDAS PROCEEDED TO CHITRAKOOT.

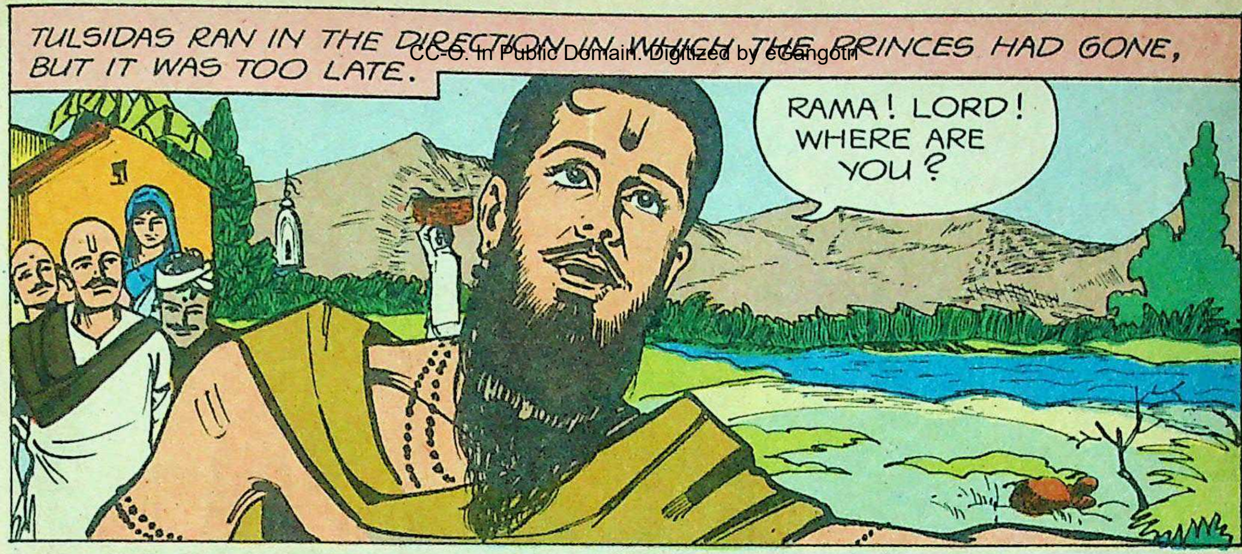

ONE DAY AT KAMADGIRI, IN CHITRAKOOT–

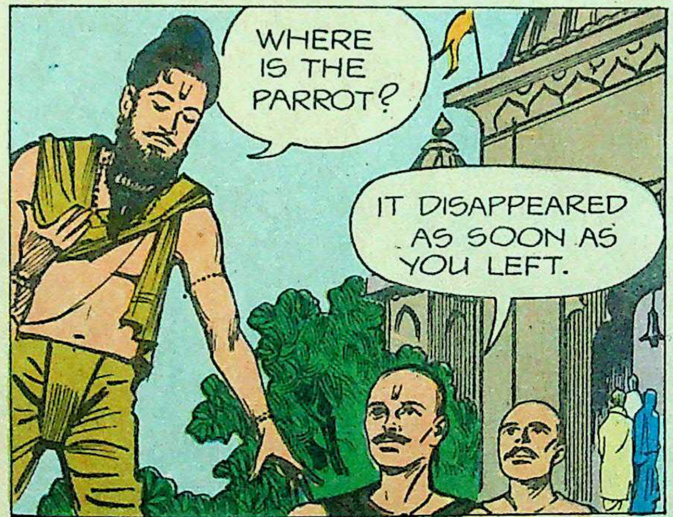

JUST THEN–
DIDN'T YOU RECOGNISE THEM? THEY WERE RAMA AND LAKSHMANA.

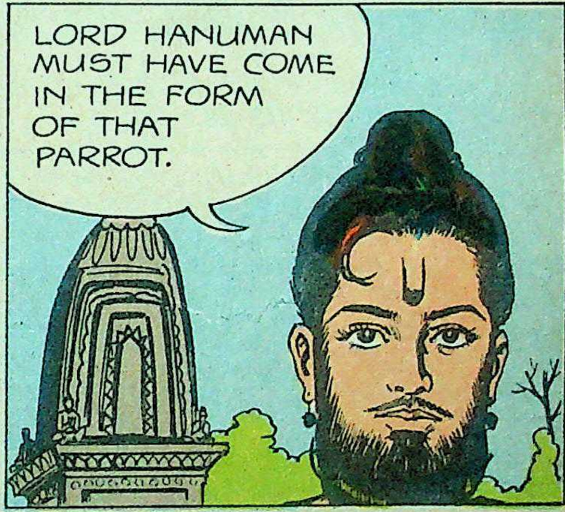

LORD! I BEG OF YOU. LET ME SEE THEM AGAIN.
WELL THEN, TOMORROW ON THE BANK OF THE MANDAKINI.
AND HANUMAN DISAPPEARED.

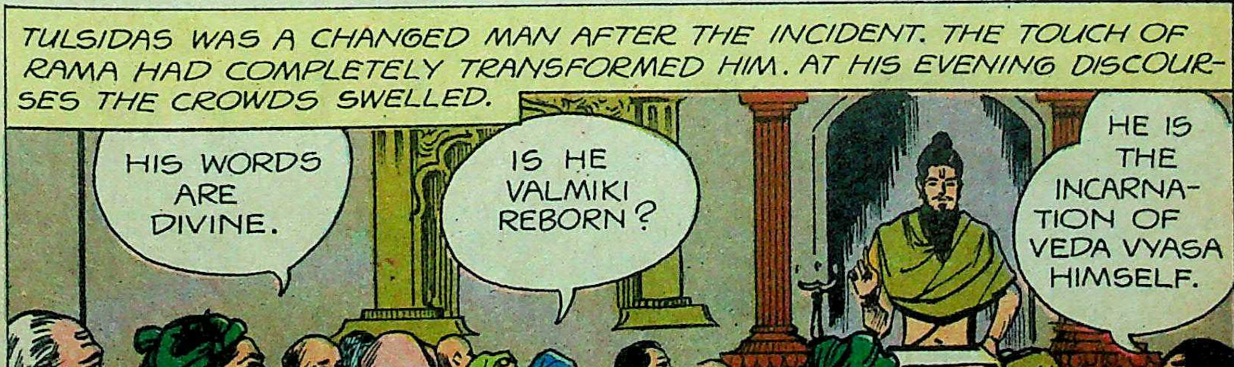

THE NEXT DAY, TULSIDAS WAS SITTING ON THE BANK OF THE MANDAKINI, RUBBING SANDALWOOD ON THE STONE, WHEN–
PLEASE APPLY TILAK ON MY FOREHEAD.

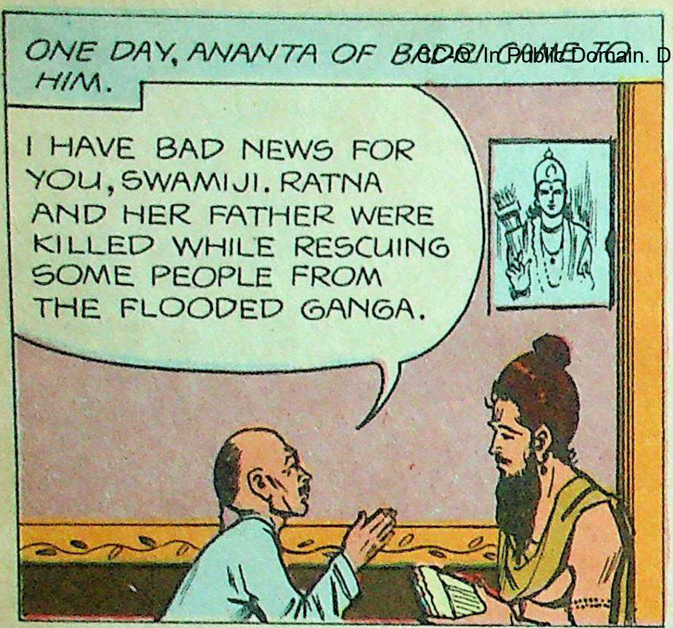

SAY, 'VICTORY TO RAMA.'
VICTORY TO RAMA.
BUT THE SECOND PRINCE HESITATED TO REPEAT THE WORDS OF TULSIDAS.
RAMA WAS GOD INCARNATE ON EARTH. WHY DO YOU HESITATE? SAY, 'VICTORY TO RAMA.'
VICTORY TO RAMA.
AND THE PRINCES VANISHED.
TULSIDAS CONTINUED TO APPLY 'TILAK' ON THE FOREHEADS OF THE OTHER DEVOTEES. JUST THEN—
THERE WAS A CROWD OF DEVOTEES ON CHITRAKOOT. AS TULSI SAT GRINDING THE SANDALWOOD PASTE, LORD RAMA CAME TO HIM FOR A TILAK...
THAT WAS RAMA.

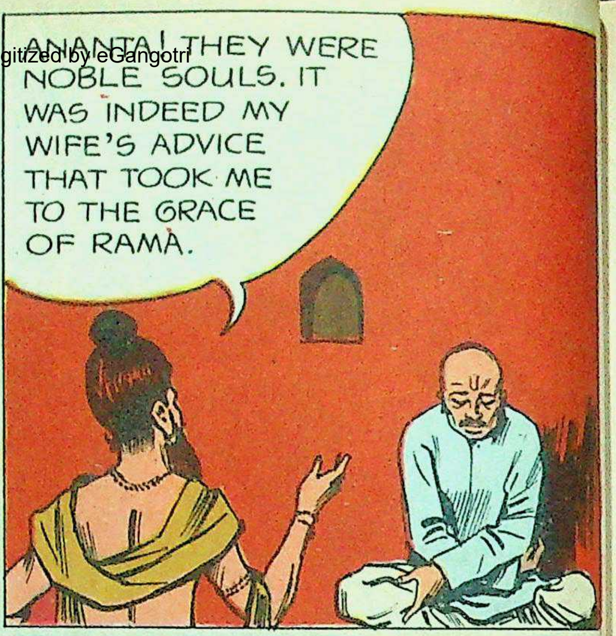

TULSIDAS RAN IN THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE PRINCES HAD GONE, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE.
RAMA! LORD! WHERE ARE YOU?

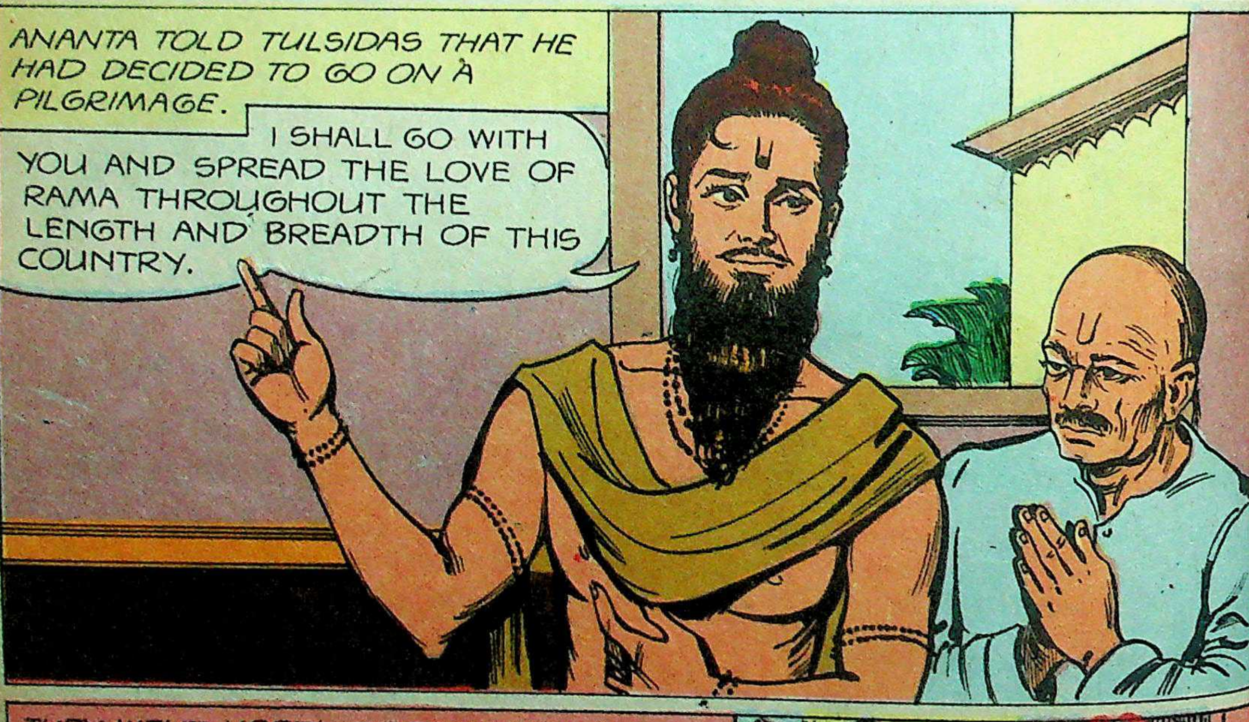

WHERE IS THE PARROT?
IT DISAPPEARED AS SOON AS YOU LEFT.

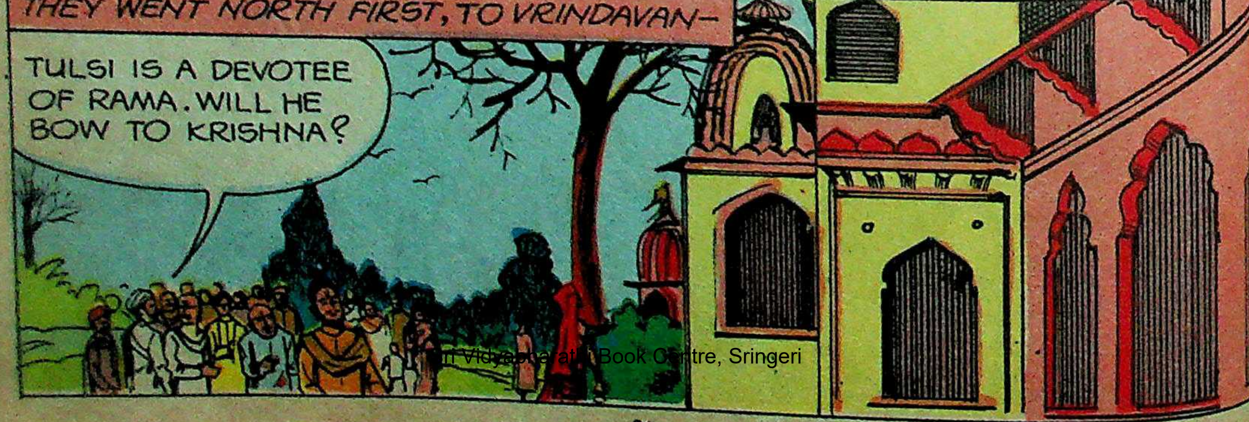

LORD HANUMAN MUST HAVE COME IN THE FORM OF THAT PARROT.


TULSIDAS WAS A CHANGED MAN AFTER THE INCIDENT. THE TOUCH OF RAMA HAD COMPLETELY TRANSFORMED HIM. AT HIS EVENING DISCOURSES THE CROWDS SWELLED.
HIS WORDS ARE DIVINE.
IS HE VALMIKI REBORN?
HE IS THE INCARNATION OF VEDA VYASA HIMSELF.


ONE DAY, ANANTA OF BADRI CAME TO HIM.
I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU, SWAMIJI. RATNA AND HER FATHER WERE KILLED WHILE RESCUING SOME PEOPLE FROM THE FLOODED GANGA.


ANANTA! THEY WERE NOBLE SOULS. IT WAS INDEED MY WIFE'S ADVICE THAT TOOK ME TO THE GRACE OF RAMA.


ANANTA TOLD TULSIDAS THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO GO ON A PILGRIMAGE.
I SHALL GO WITH YOU AND SPREAD THE LOVE OF RAMA THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF THIS COUNTRY.


THEY WENT NORTH FIRST, TO VRINDAVAN–
TULSI IS A DEVOTEE OF RAMA. WILL HE BOW TO KRISHNA?

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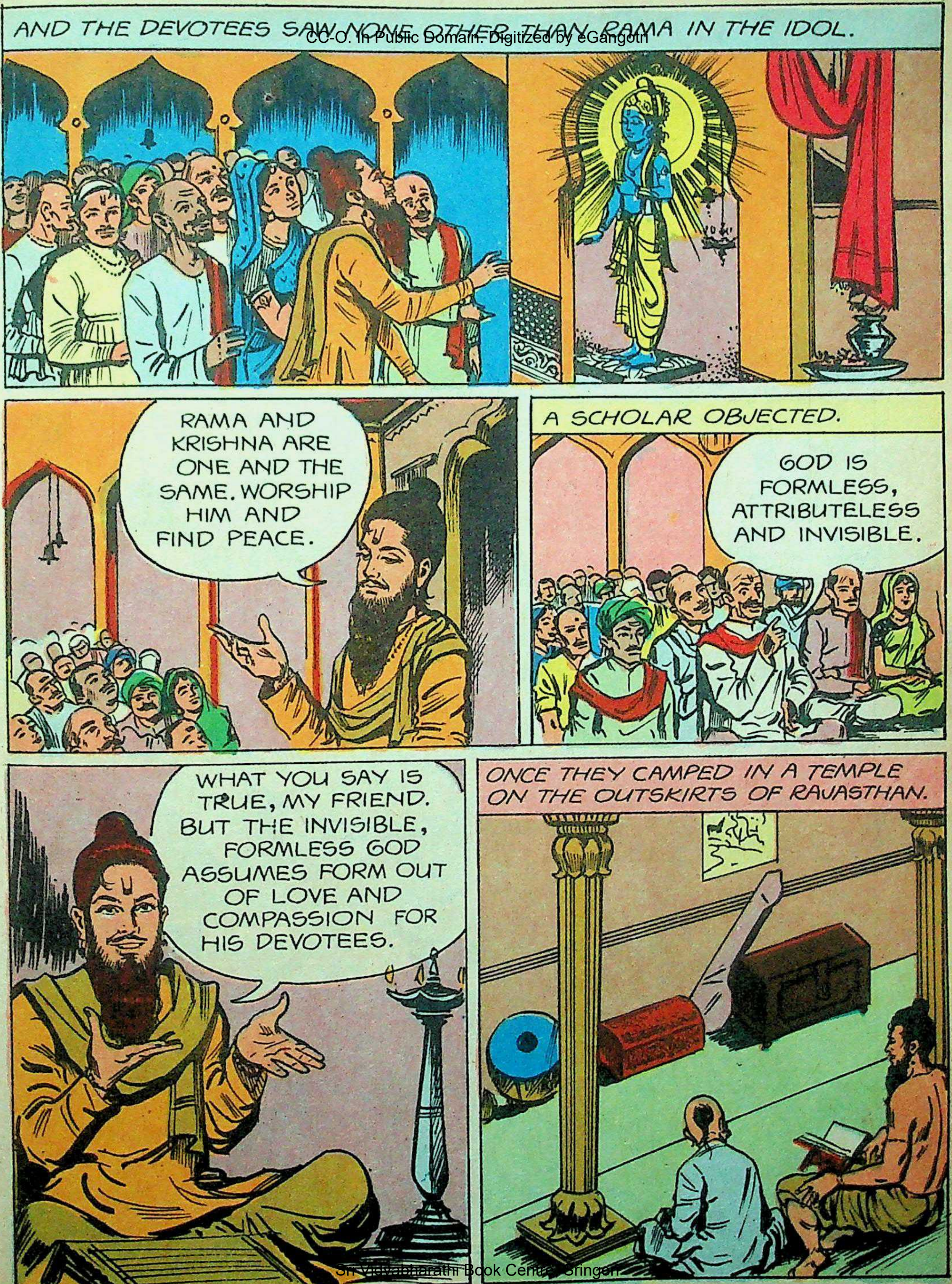
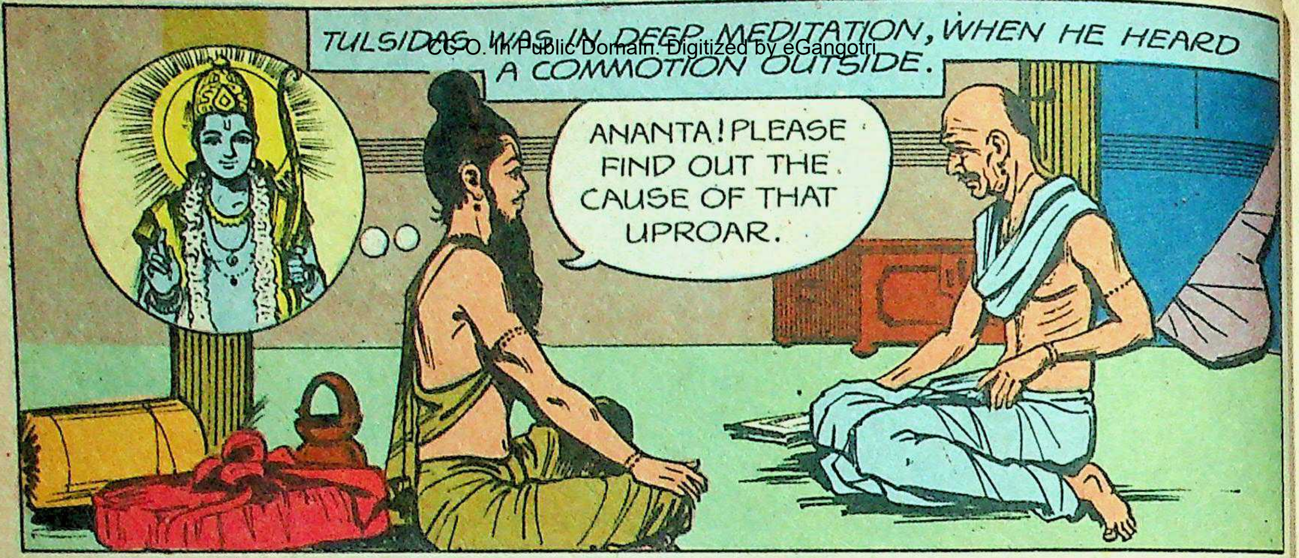
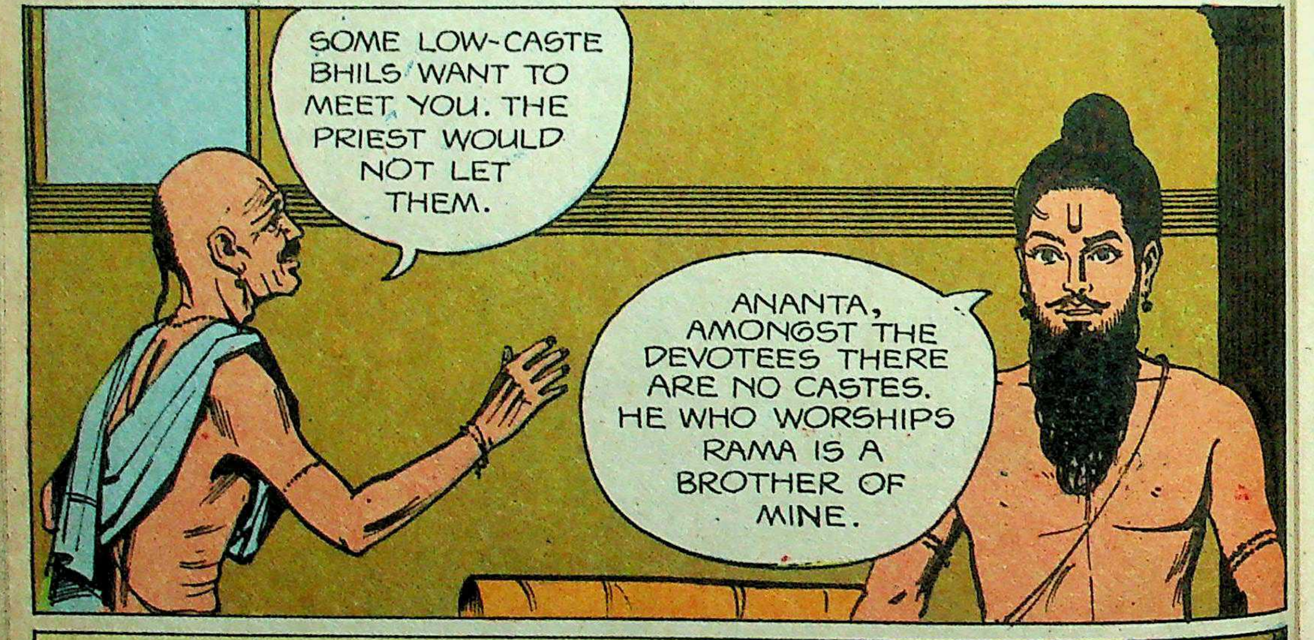
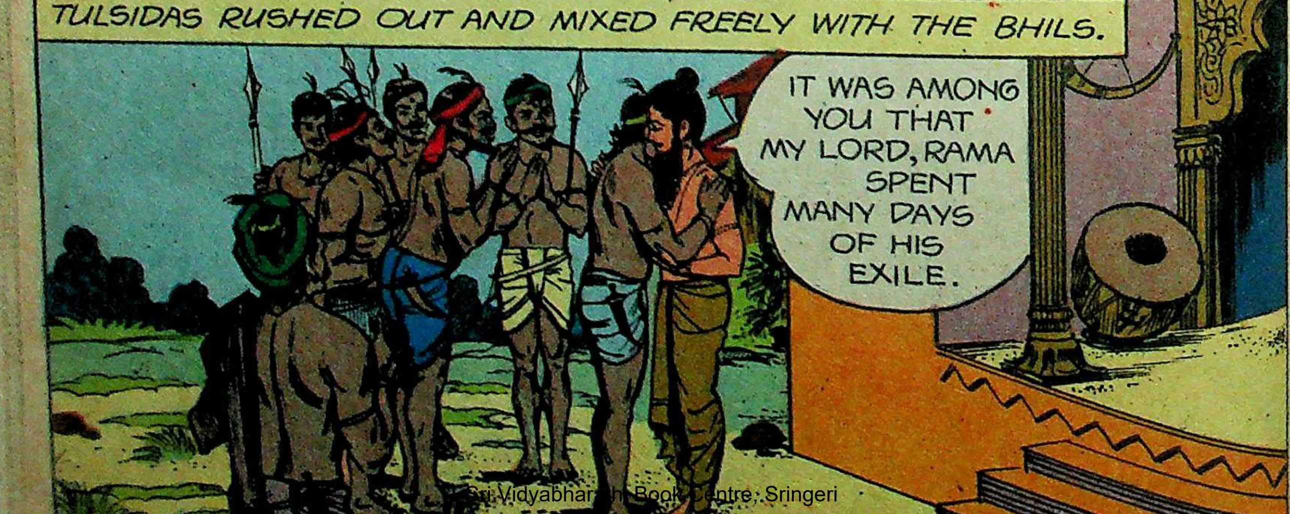
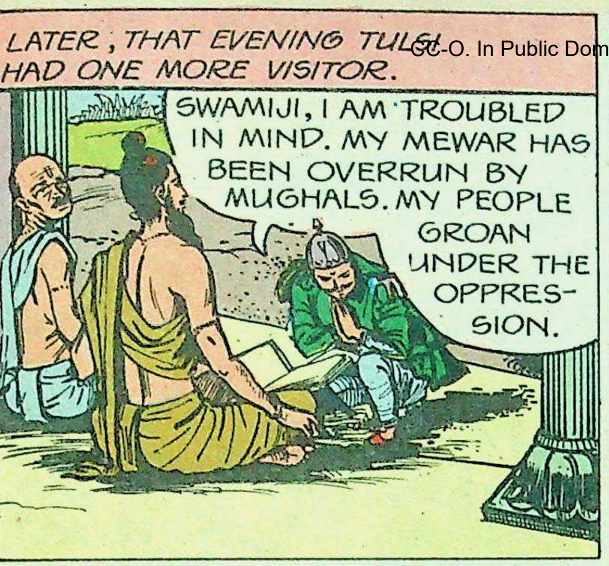
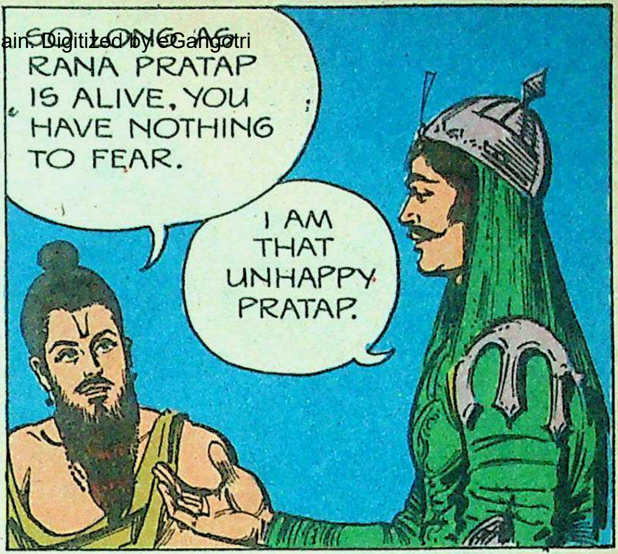

AND THE DEVOTEES SAW NONE OTHER THAN RAMA IN THE IDOL.
RAMA AND KRISHNA ARE ONE AND THE SAME. WORSHIP HIM AND FIND PEACE.
A SCHOLAR OBJECTED.
GOD IS FORMLESS, ATTRIBUTELESS AND INVISIBLE.
WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE, MY FRIEND. BUT THE INVISIBLE, FORMLESS GOD ASSUMES FORM OUT OF LOVE AND COMPASSION FOR HIS DEVOTEES.
ONCE THEY CAMPED IN A TEMPLE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF RAJASTHAN.

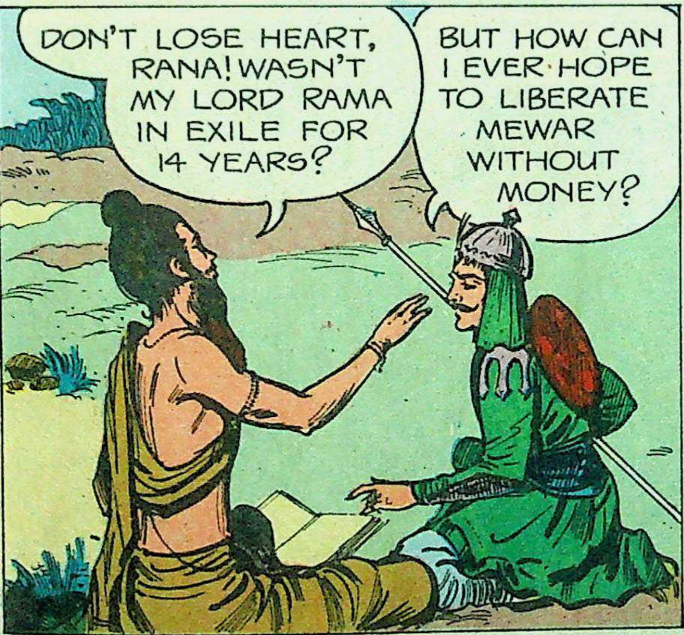

TULSIDAS WAS IN DEEP MEDITATION, WHEN HE HEARD A COMMOTION OUTSIDE.
ANANTA! PLEASE FIND OUT THE CAUSE OF THAT UPROAR.

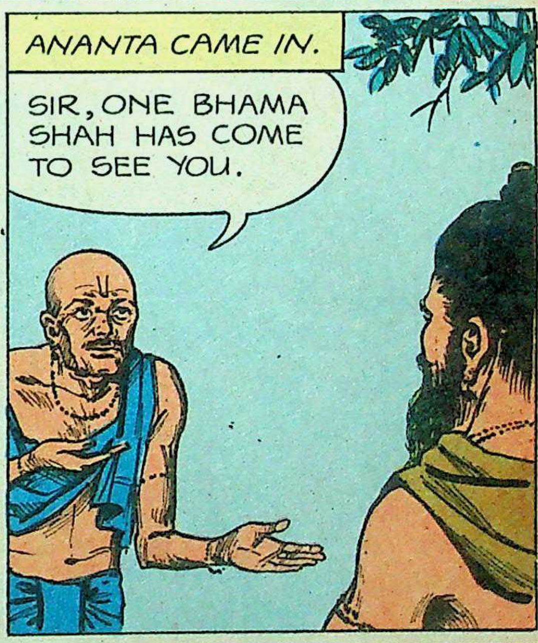

SOME LOW-CASTE BHILS WANT TO MEET YOU. THE PRIEST WOULD NOT LET THEM.
ANANTA, AMONGST THE DEVOTEES THERE ARE NO CASTES. HE WHO WORSHIPS RAMA IS A BROTHER OF MINE.

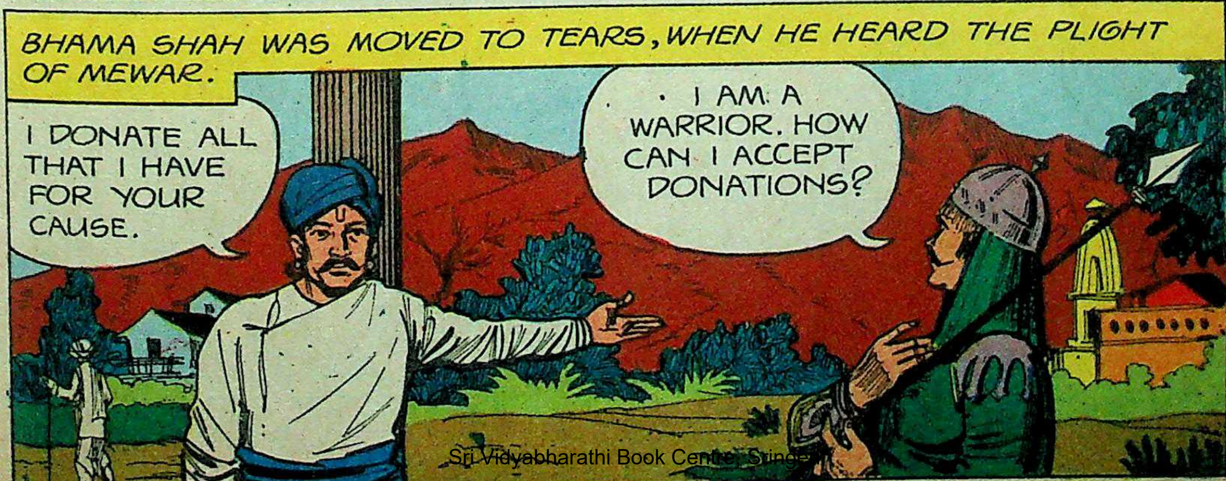

TULSIDAS RUSHED OUT AND MIXED FREELY WITH THE BHILS.
IT WAS AMONG YOU THAT MY LORD, RAMA SPENT MANY DAYS OF HIS EXILE.

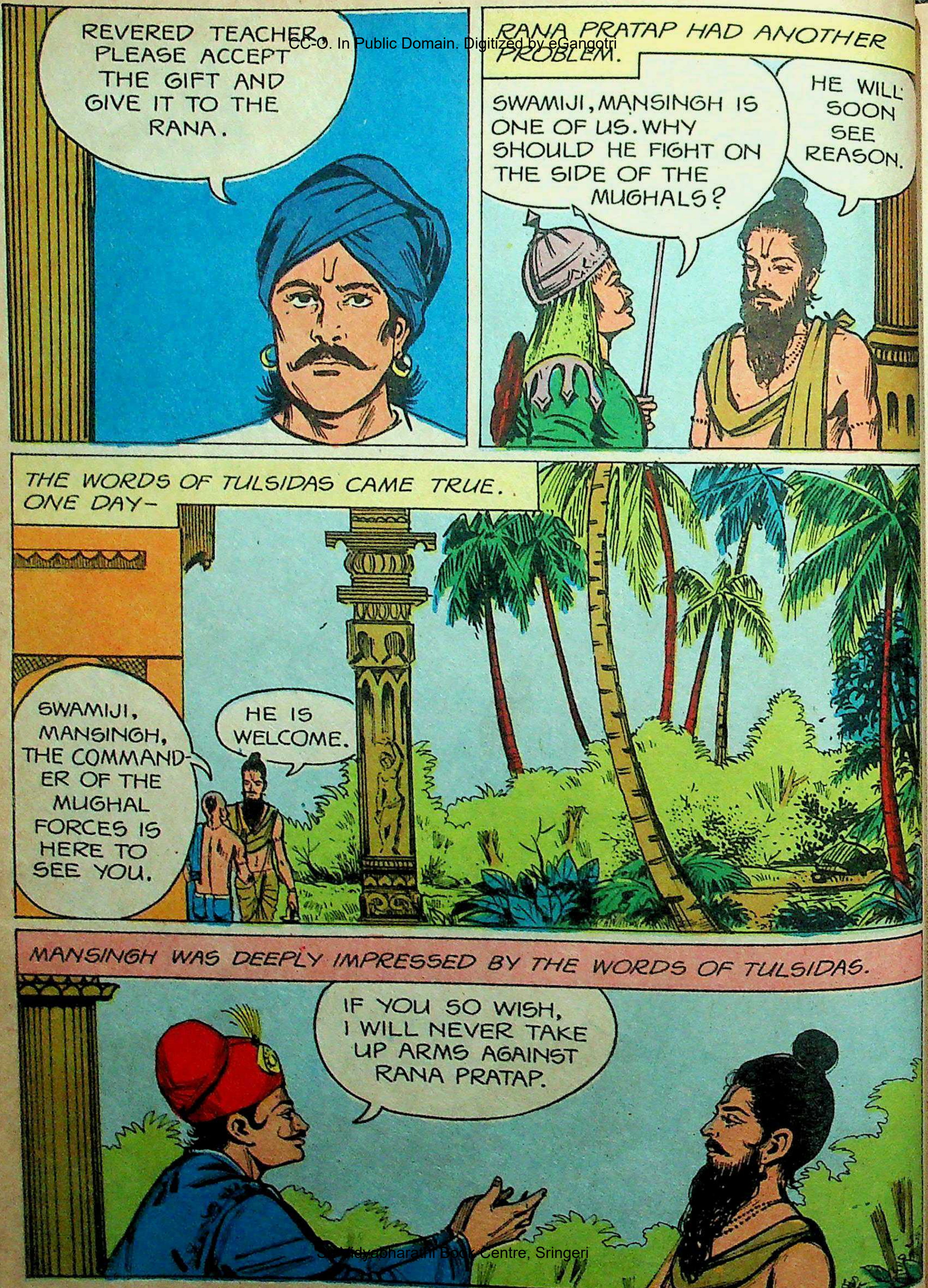

LATER, THAT EVENING TULSI HAD ONE MORE VISITOR.
SWAMIJI, I AM TROUBLED IN MIND. MY MEWAR HAS BEEN OVERRUN BY MUGHALS. MY PEOPLE GROAN UNDER THE OPPRESSION.


SO LONG AS RANA PRATAP IS ALIVE, YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR.
I AM THAT UNHAPPY PRATAP.

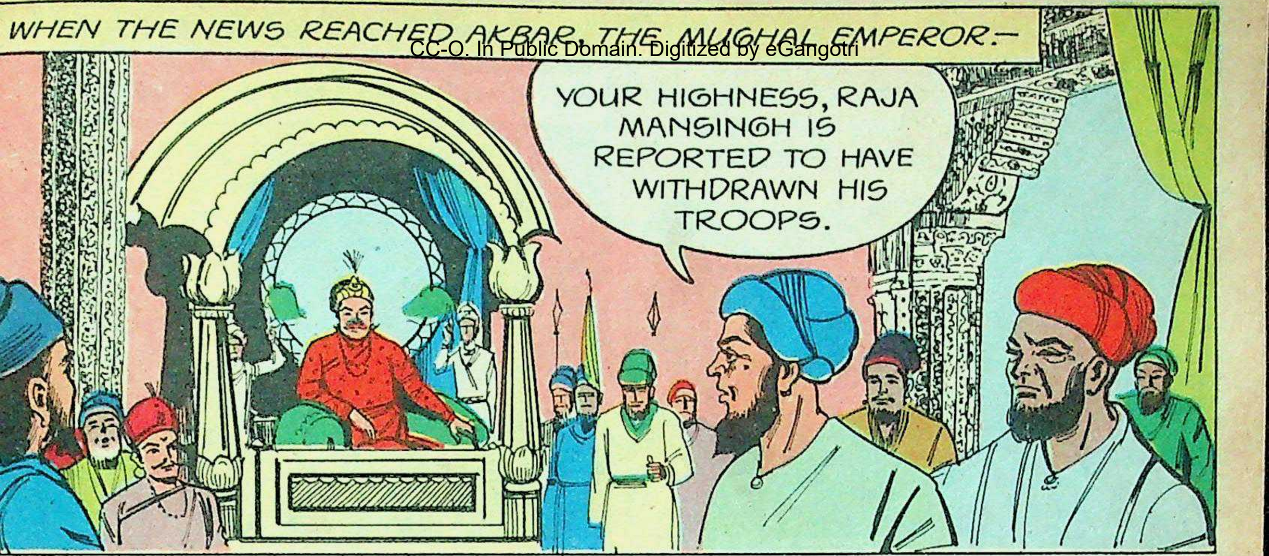

DON'T LOSE HEART, RANA! WASN'T MY LORD RAMA IN EXILE FOR 14 YEARS?
BUT HOW CAN I EVER HOPE TO LIBERATE MEWAR WITHOUT MONEY?

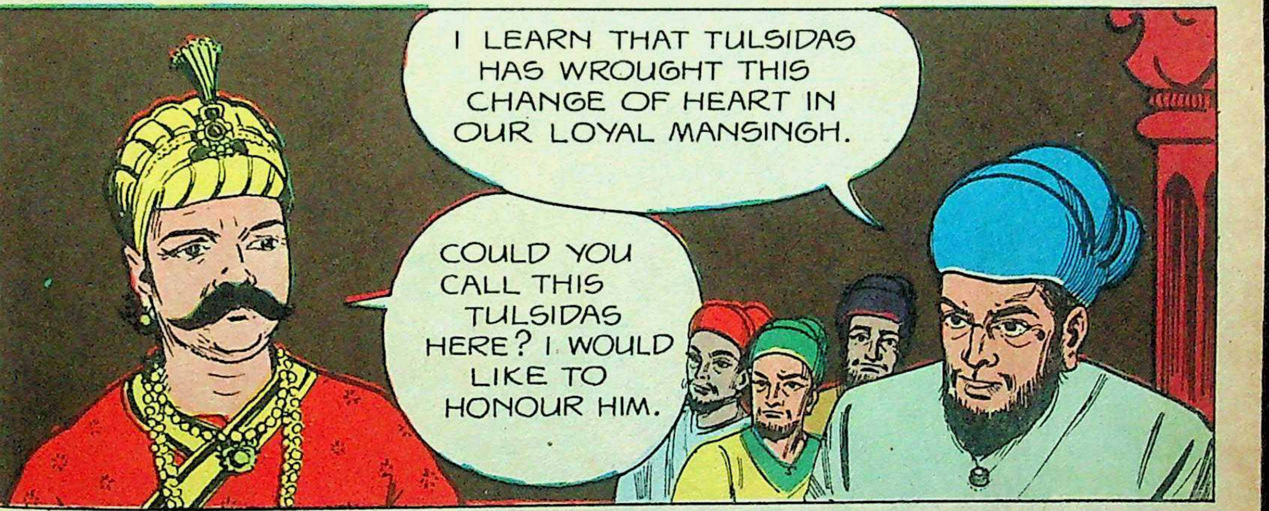

ANANTA CAME IN.
SIR, ONE BHAMA SHAH HAS COME TO SEE YOU.


BHAMA SHAH WAS MOVED TO TEARS, WHEN HE HEARD THE PLIGHT OF MEWAR.
I DONATE ALL THAT I HAVE FOR YOUR CAUSE.
I AM A WARRIOR. HOW CAN I ACCEPT DONATIONS?

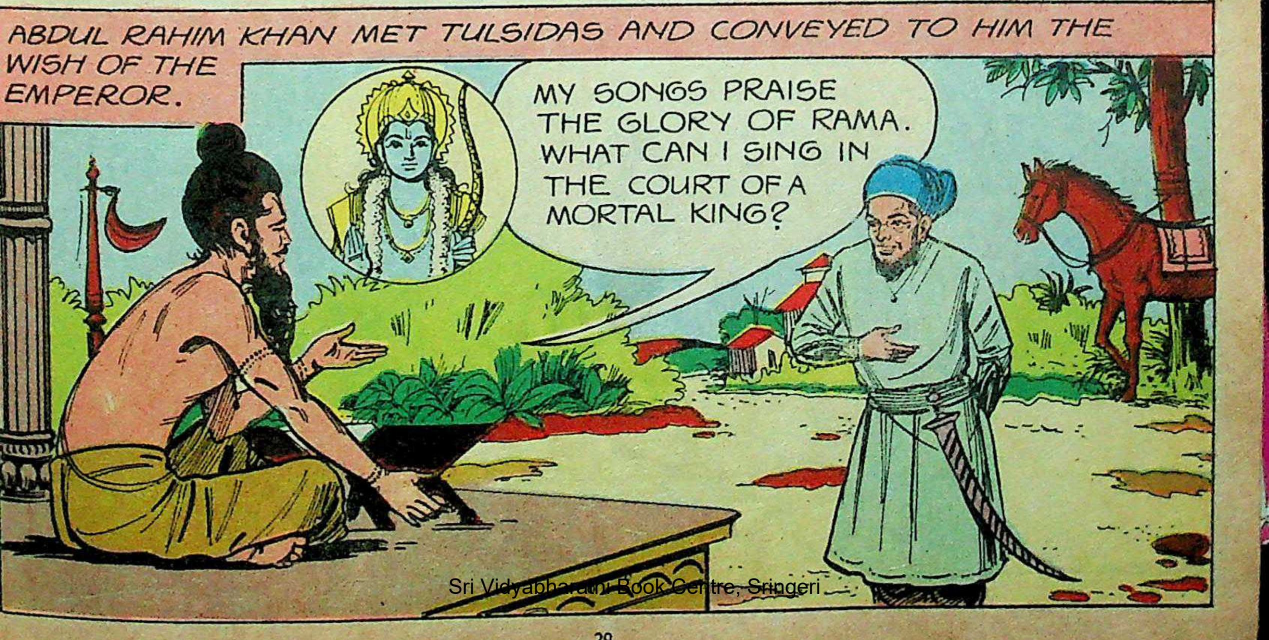

REVERED TEACHER, PLEASE ACCEPT THE GIFT AND GIVE IT TO THE RANA.
RANA PRATAP HAD ANOTHER PROBLEM.
SWAMIJI, MANSINGH IS ONE OF US. WHY SHOULD HE FIGHT ON THE SIDE OF THE MUGHALS?
HE WILL SOON SEE REASON.
THE WORDS OF TULSIDAS CAME TRUE. ONE DAY–
SWAMIJI, MANSINGH, THE COMMANDER OF THE MUGHAL FORCES IS HERE TO SEE YOU.
HE IS WELCOME.
MANSINGH WAS DEEPLY IMPRESSED BY THE WORDS OF TULSIDAS.
IF YOU SO WISH, I WILL NEVER TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST RANA PRATAP.

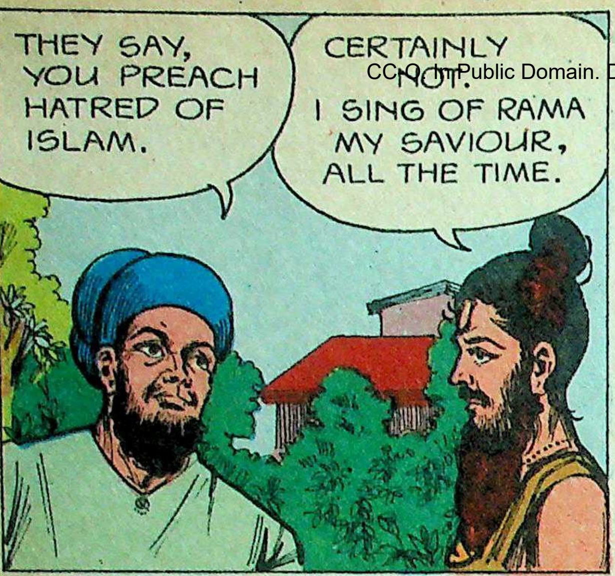
WHEN THE NEWS REACHED AKBAR, THE MUGHAL EMPEROR:—

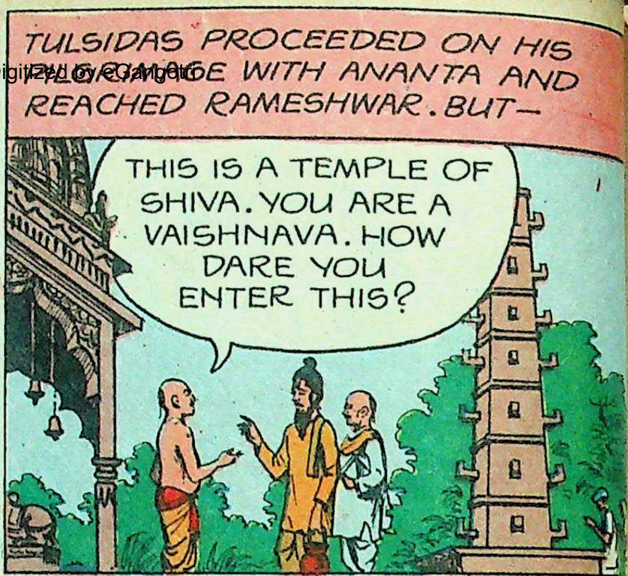

YOUR HIGHNESS, RAJA MANSINGH IS REPORTED TO HAVE WITHDRAWN HIS TROOPS.

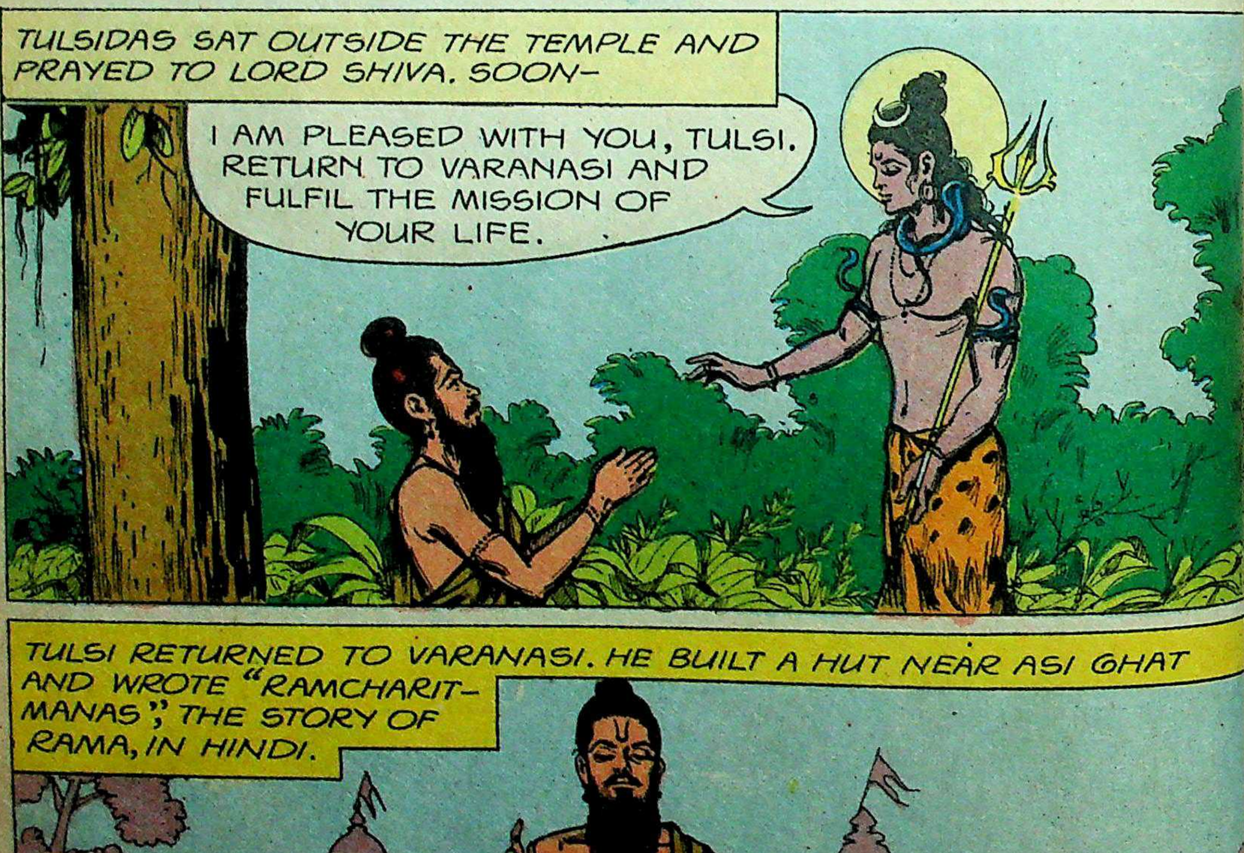

I LEARN THAT TULSIDAS HAS WROUGHT THIS CHANGE OF HEART IN OUR LOYAL MANSINGH.
COULD YOU CALL THIS TULSIDAS HERE? I WOULD LIKE TO HONOUR HIM.

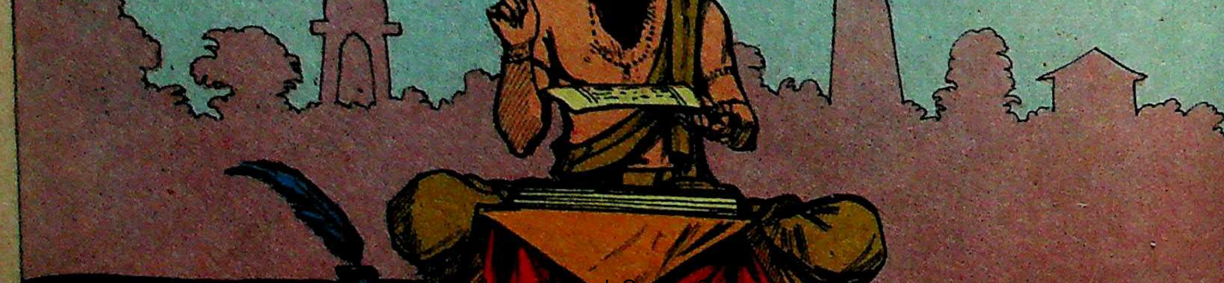
ABDUL RAHIM KHAN MET TULSIDAS AND CONVEYED TO HIM THE WISH OF THE EMPEROR.


MY SONGS PRAISE THE GLORY OF RAMA. WHAT CAN I SING IN THE COURT OF A MORTAL KING?


THEY SAY, YOU PREACH HATRED OF ISLAM.
CERTAINLY NOT. I SING OF RAMA MY SAVIOUR, ALL THE TIME.


TULSIDAS PROCEEDED ON HIS PILGRIMAGE WITH ANANTA AND REACHED RAMESHWAR. BUT–
THIS IS A TEMPLE OF SHIVA. YOU ARE A VAISHNAVA. HOW DARE YOU ENTER THIS?


TULSIDAS SAT OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE AND PRAYED TO LORD SHIVA. SOON–
I AM PLEASED WITH YOU, TULSI. RETURN TO VARANASI AND FULFIL THE MISSION OF YOUR LIFE.


TULSI RETURNED TO VARANASI. HE BUILT A HUT NEAR ASI GHAT AND WROTE "RAMCHARIT-MANAS", THE STORY OF RAMA, IN HINDI.

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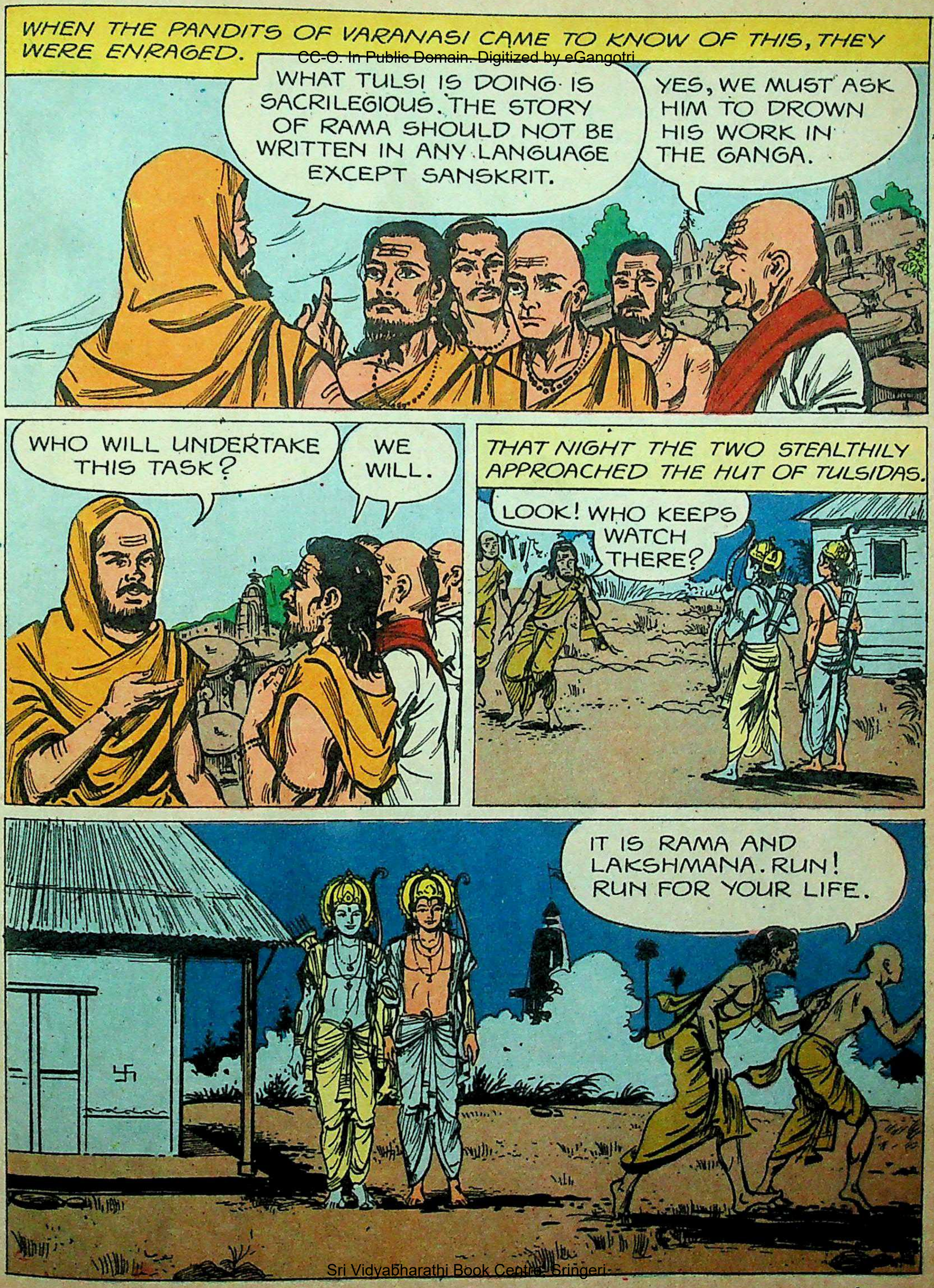
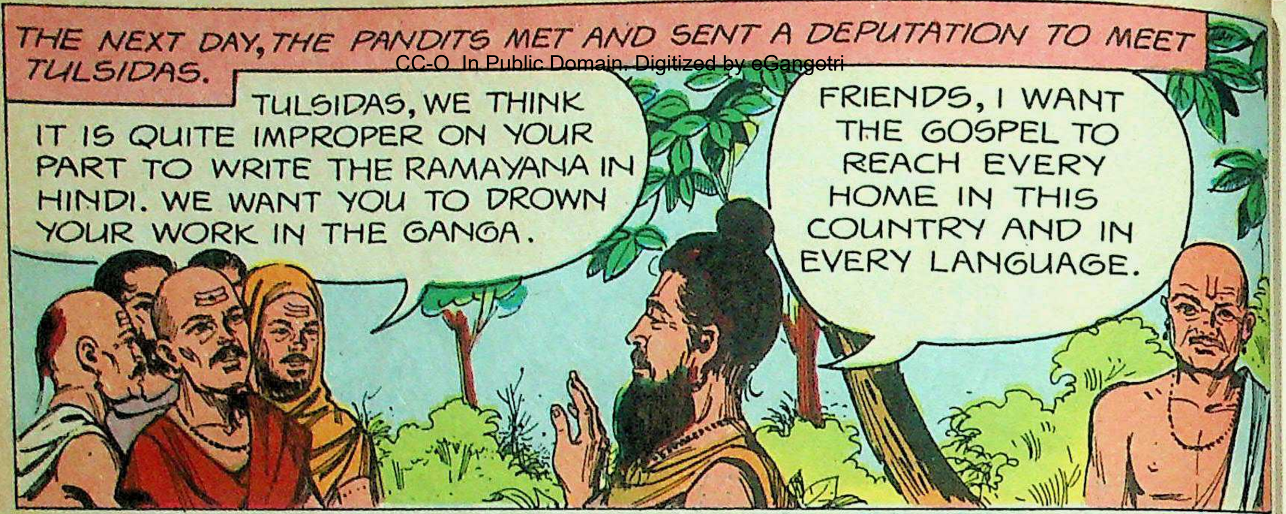
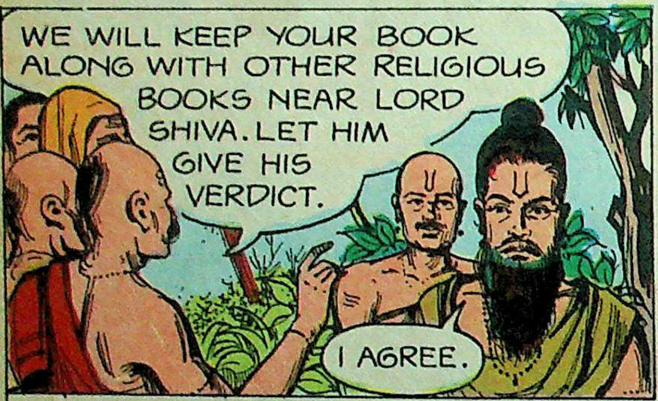
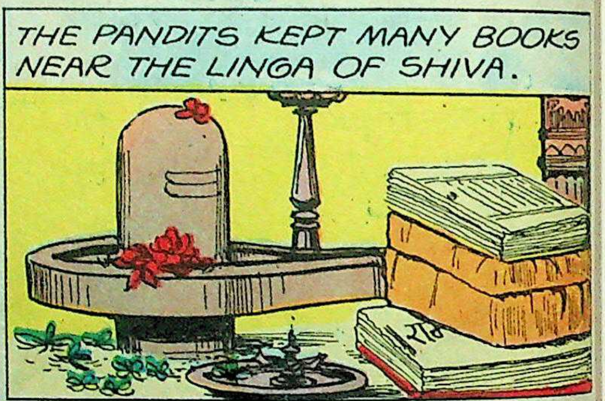

WHEN THE PANDITS OF VARANASI CAME TO KNOW OF THIS, THEY WERE ENRAGED.
WHAT TULSI IS DOING IS SACRILEGIOUS. THE STORY OF RAMA SHOULD NOT BE WRITTEN IN ANY LANGUAGE EXCEPT SANSKRIT.
YES, WE MUST ASK HIM TO DROWN HIS WORK IN THE GANGA.
WHO WILL UNDERTAKE THIS TASK?
WE WILL.
THAT NIGHT THE TWO STEALTHILY APPROACHED THE HUT OF TULSIDAS.
LOOK! WHO KEEPS WATCH THERE?
IT IS RAMA AND LAKSHMANA. RUN! RUN FOR YOUR LIFE.

THE NEXT DAY, THE PANDITS MET AND SENT A DEPUTATION TO MEET TULSIDAS.

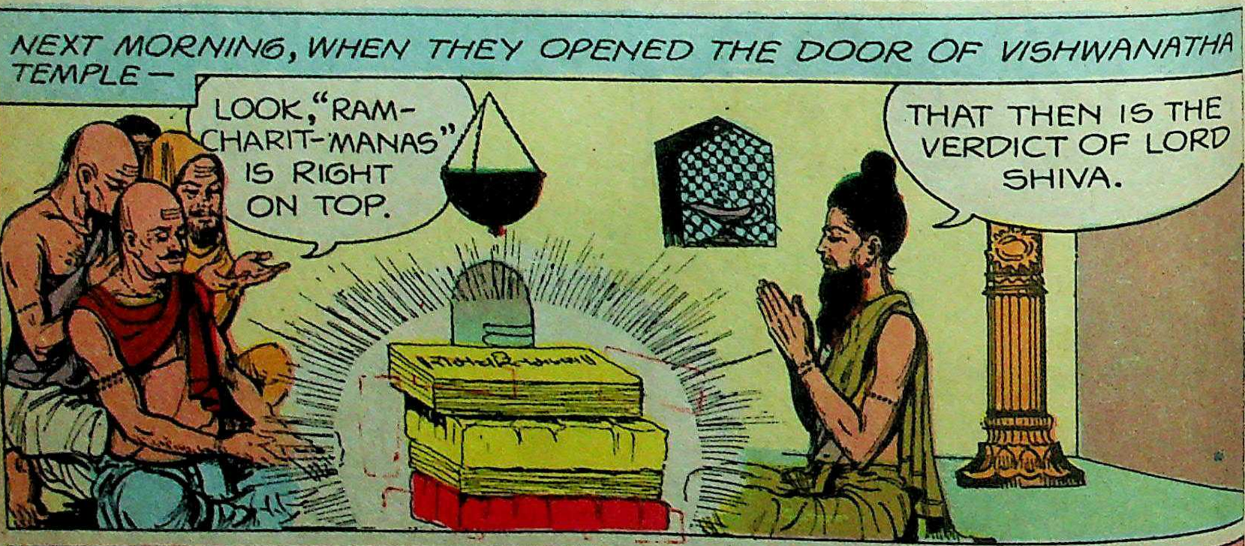

TULSIDAS, WE THINK IT IS QUITE IMPROPER ON YOUR PART TO WRITE THE RAMAYANA IN HINDI. WE WANT YOU TO DROWN YOUR WORK IN THE GANGA.
FRIENDS, I WANT THE GOSPEL TO REACH EVERY HOME IN THIS COUNTRY AND IN EVERY LANGUAGE.


WE WILL KEEP YOUR BOOK ALONG WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS BOOKS NEAR LORD SHIVA. LET HIM GIVE HIS VERDICT.
I AGREE.

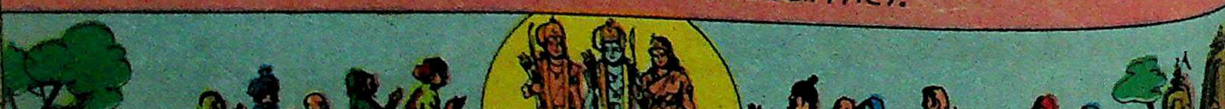
THE PANDITS KEPT MANY BOOKS NEAR THE LINGA OF SHIVA.



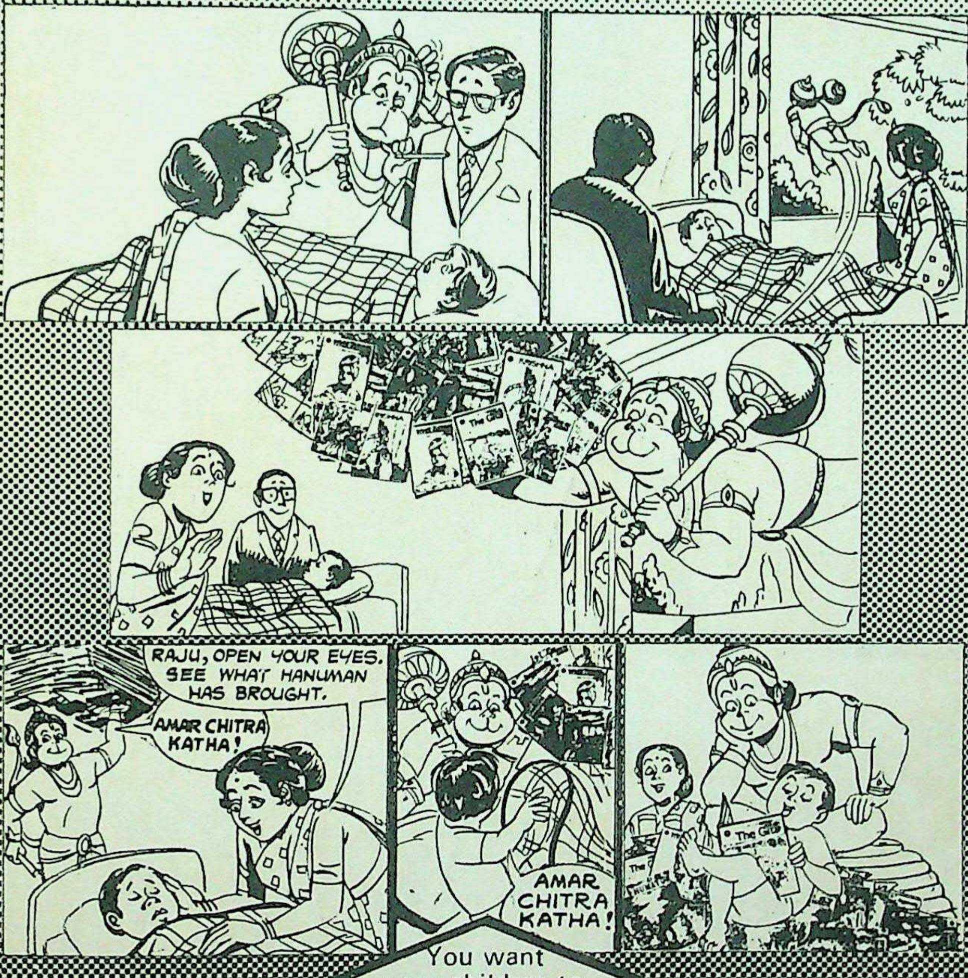
NEXT MORNING, WHEN THEY OPENED THE DOOR OF VISHWANATHA TEMPLE—


LOOK, "RAM-CHARIT-MANAS" IS RIGHT ON TOP.
THAT THEN IS THE VERDICT OF LORD SHIVA.

TULSIDAS LIVED LONG AND HIS FAME SPREAD FAR AND WIDE. HIS RAMCHARIT-MANAS IS TODAY ONE OF THE MOST TREASURED POSSESSIONS OF THIS COUNTRY.



HANUMAN
TO THE RESCUE


RAJU, OPEN YOUR EYES. SEE WHAT HANUMAN HAS BROUGHT.
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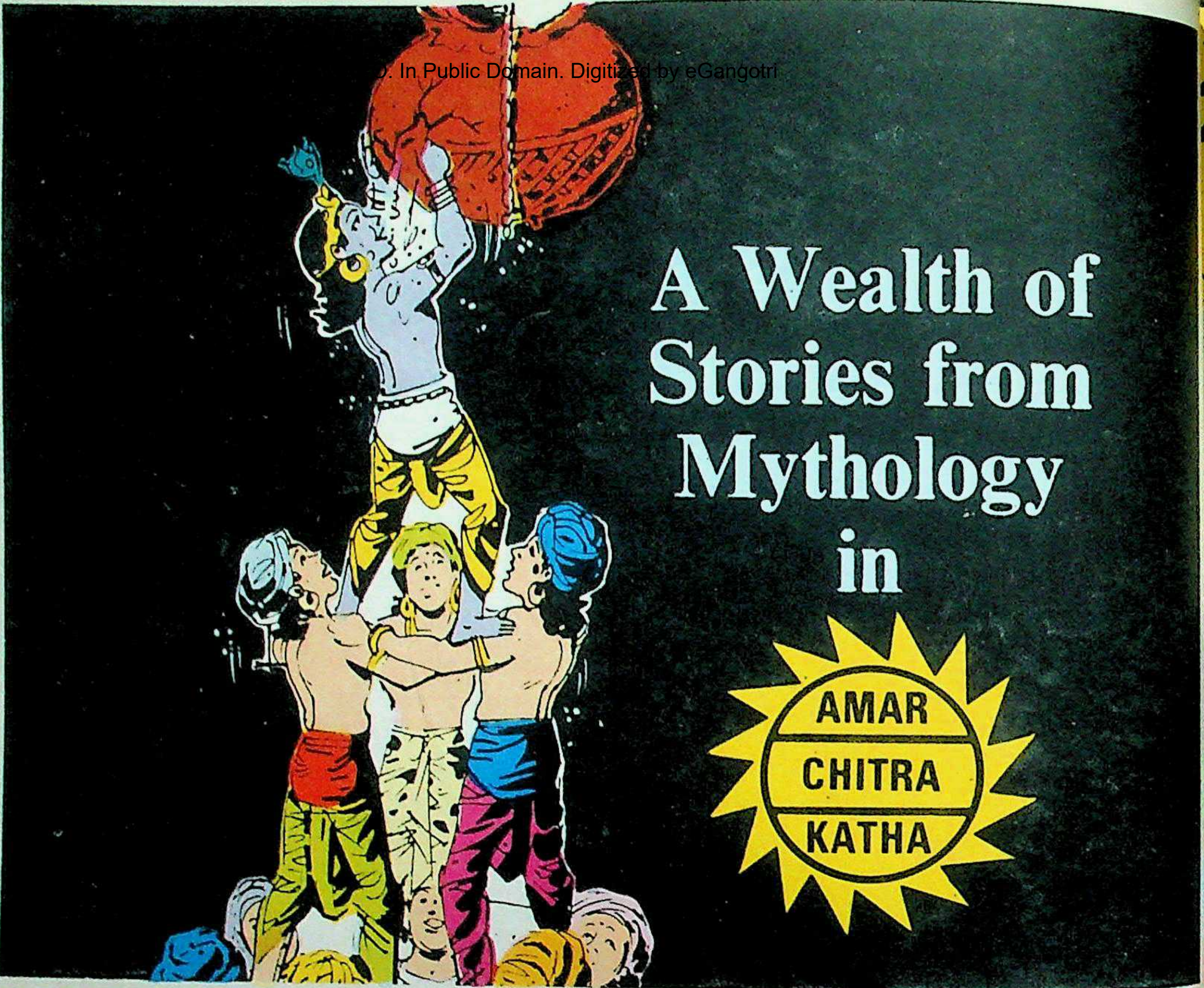
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SUKANYA

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But if the story of Chyavana has been retold over and over again, it is essentially because of Sukanya, the young daughter of king Sharyaati, whom he married. Though she was accustomed to the luxuries of life, she forsook them all for her husband and through her words and deeds tried to bring comfort to him.

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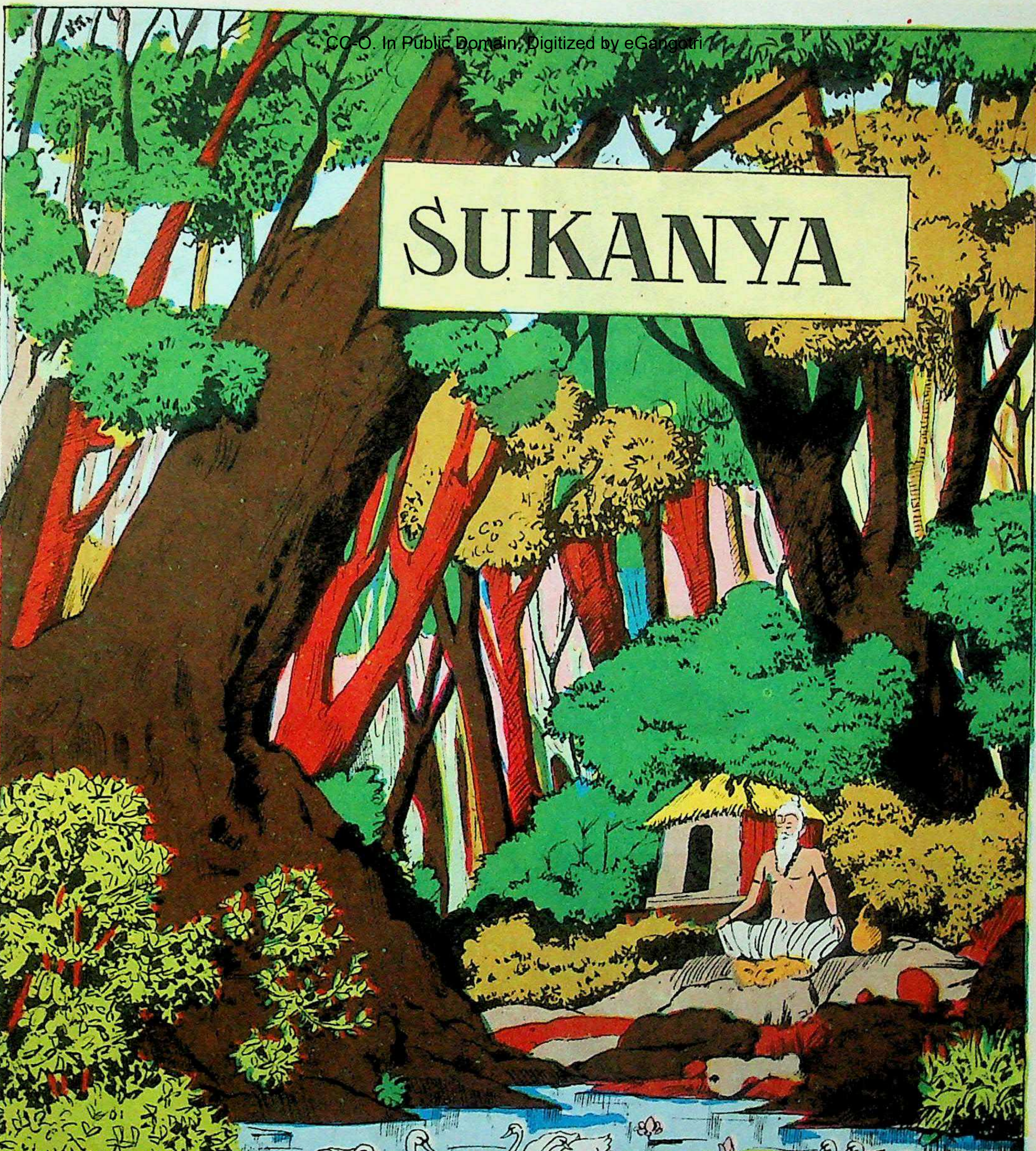
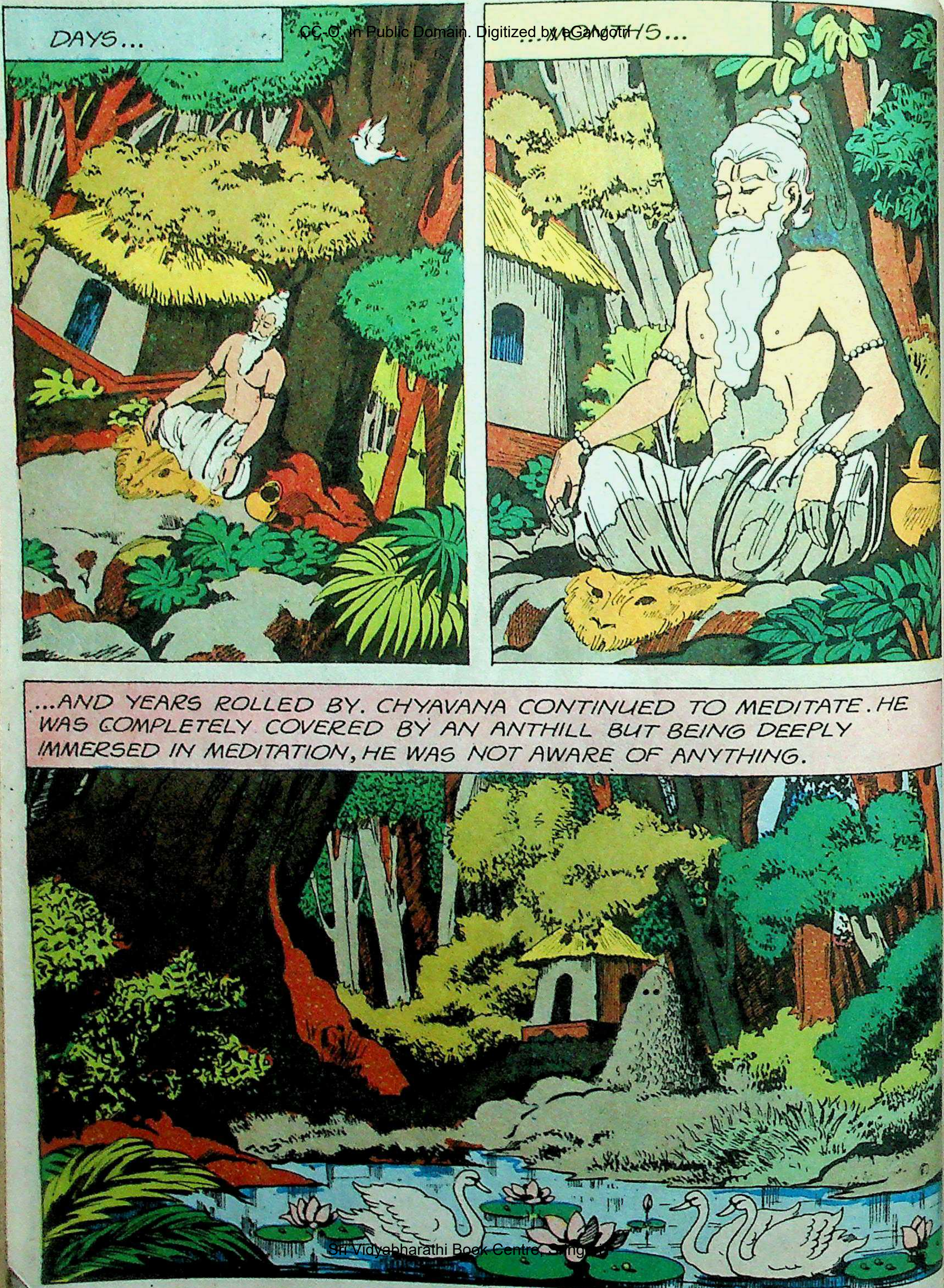
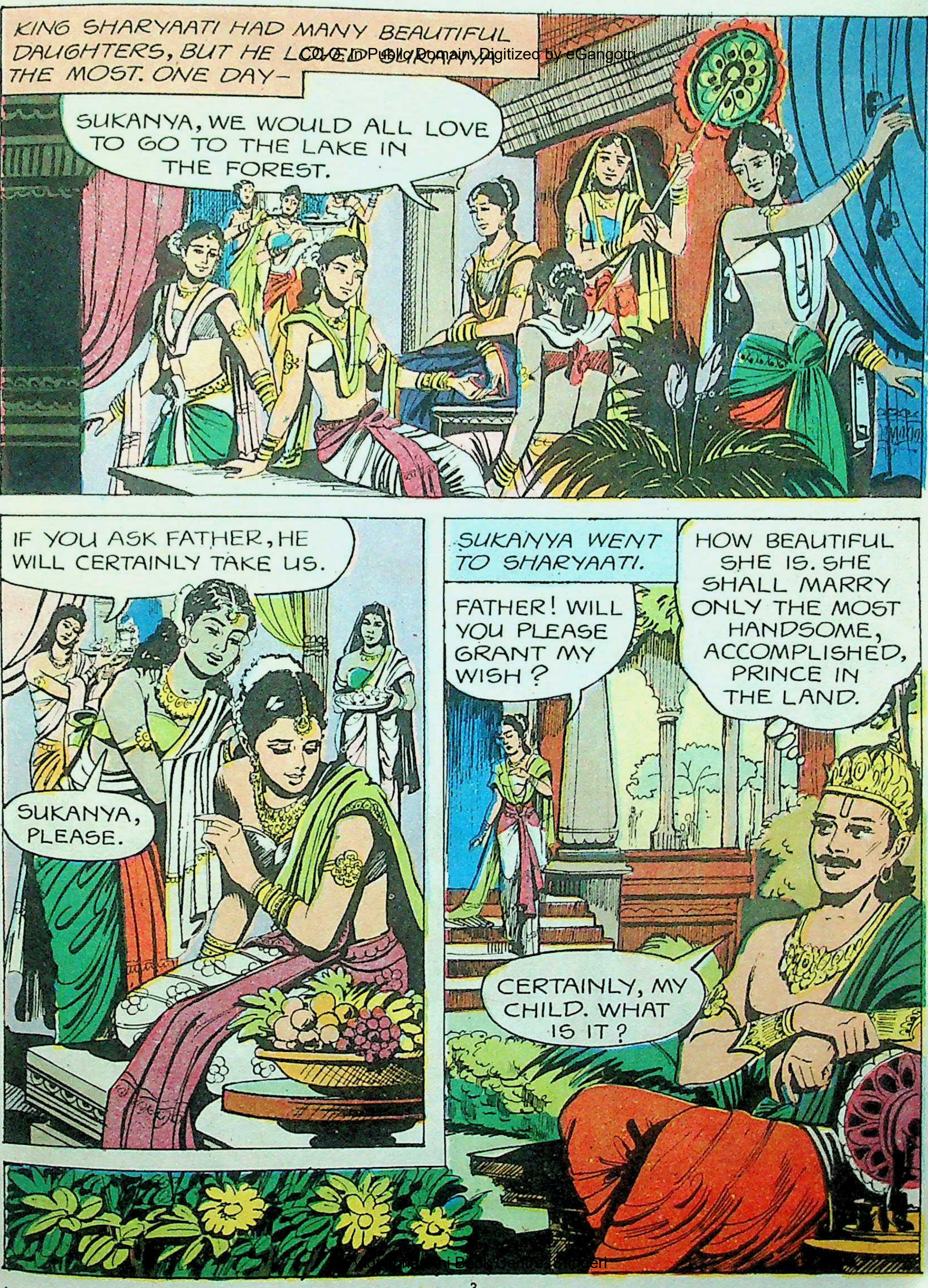
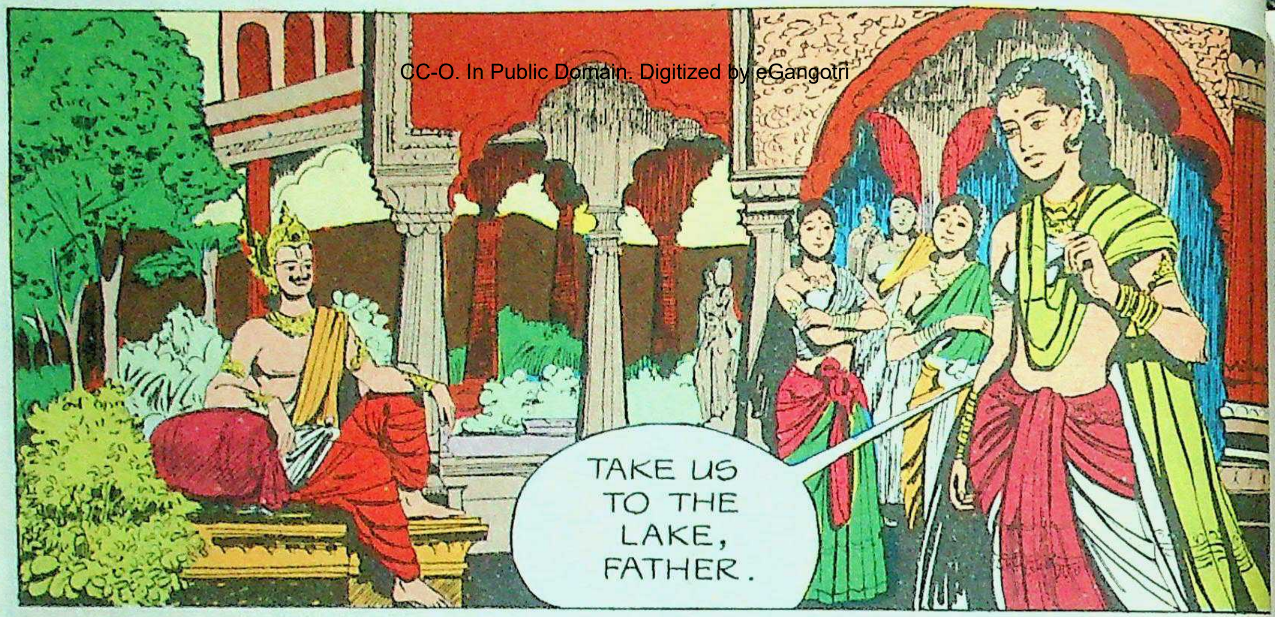
SUKANYA

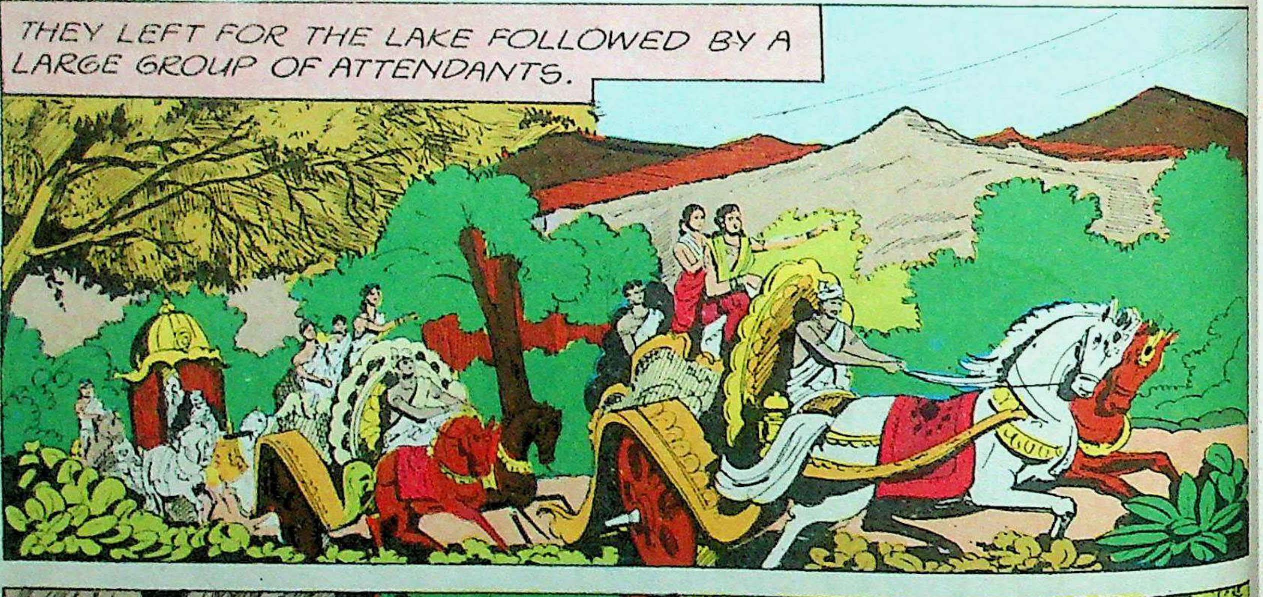


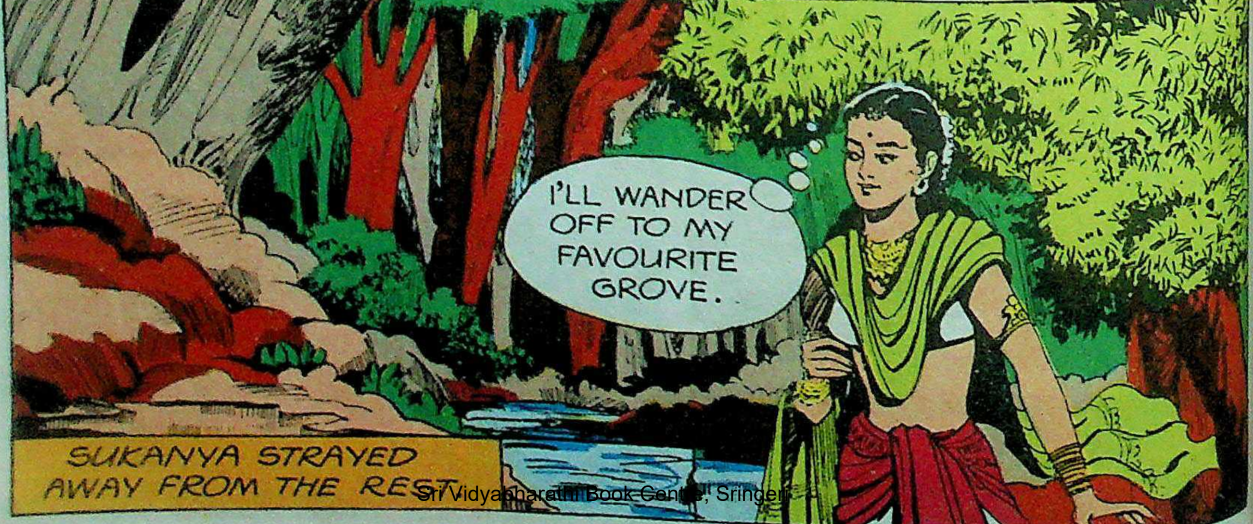
LONG LONG AGO, THERE LIVED A SAGE CALLED CHYAVANA. HE PERFORMED HIS PENANCES AND AUSTERITIES AND MEDITATED NEAR A LAKE IN A JUNGLE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SHARYAATI'S KINGDOM.

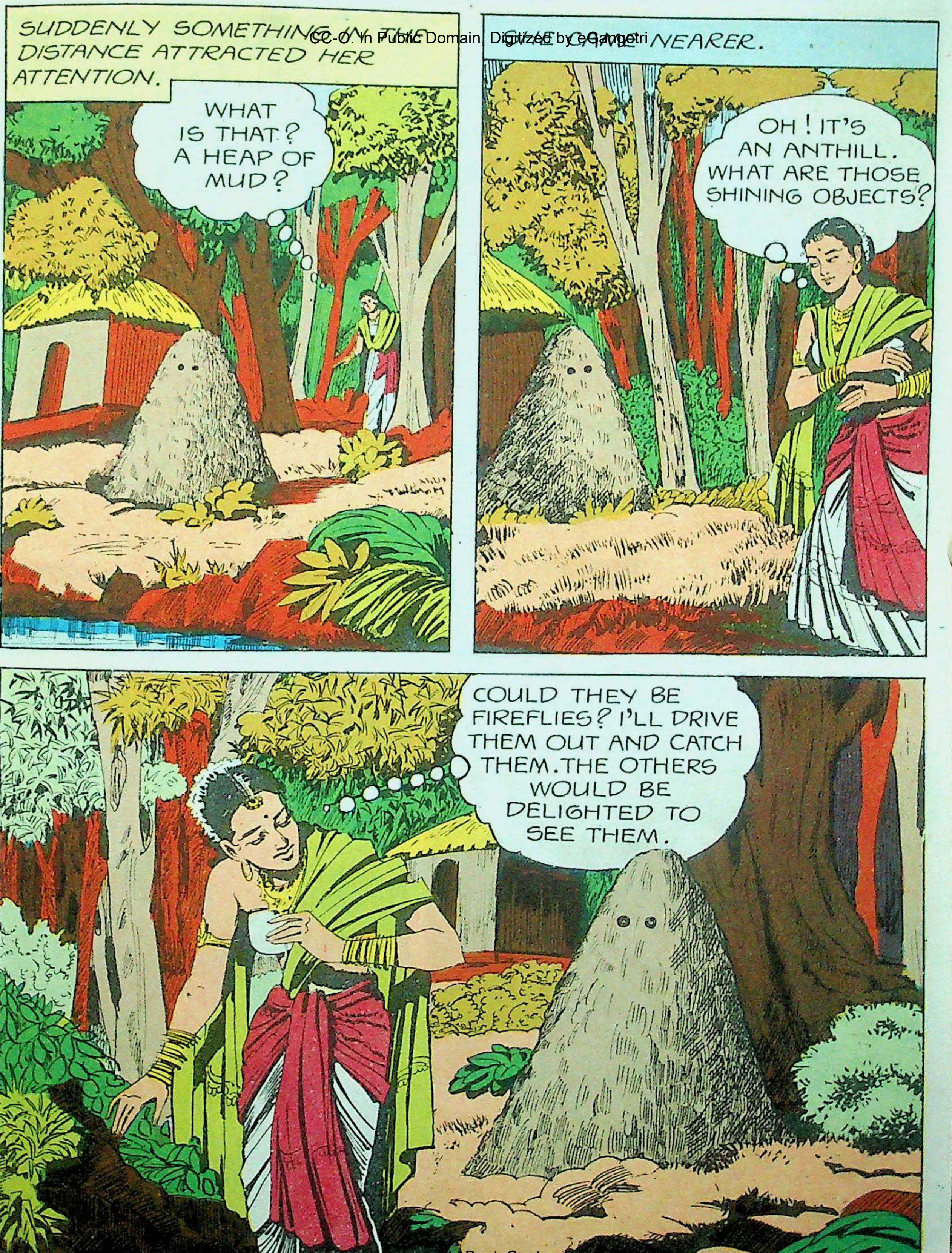

DAYS...
...MONTHS...
...AND YEARS ROLLED BY. CHYAVANA CONTINUED TO MEDITATE. HE WAS COMPLETELY COVERED BY AN ANTHILL BUT BEING DEEPLY IMMERSED IN MEDITATION, HE WAS NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING.

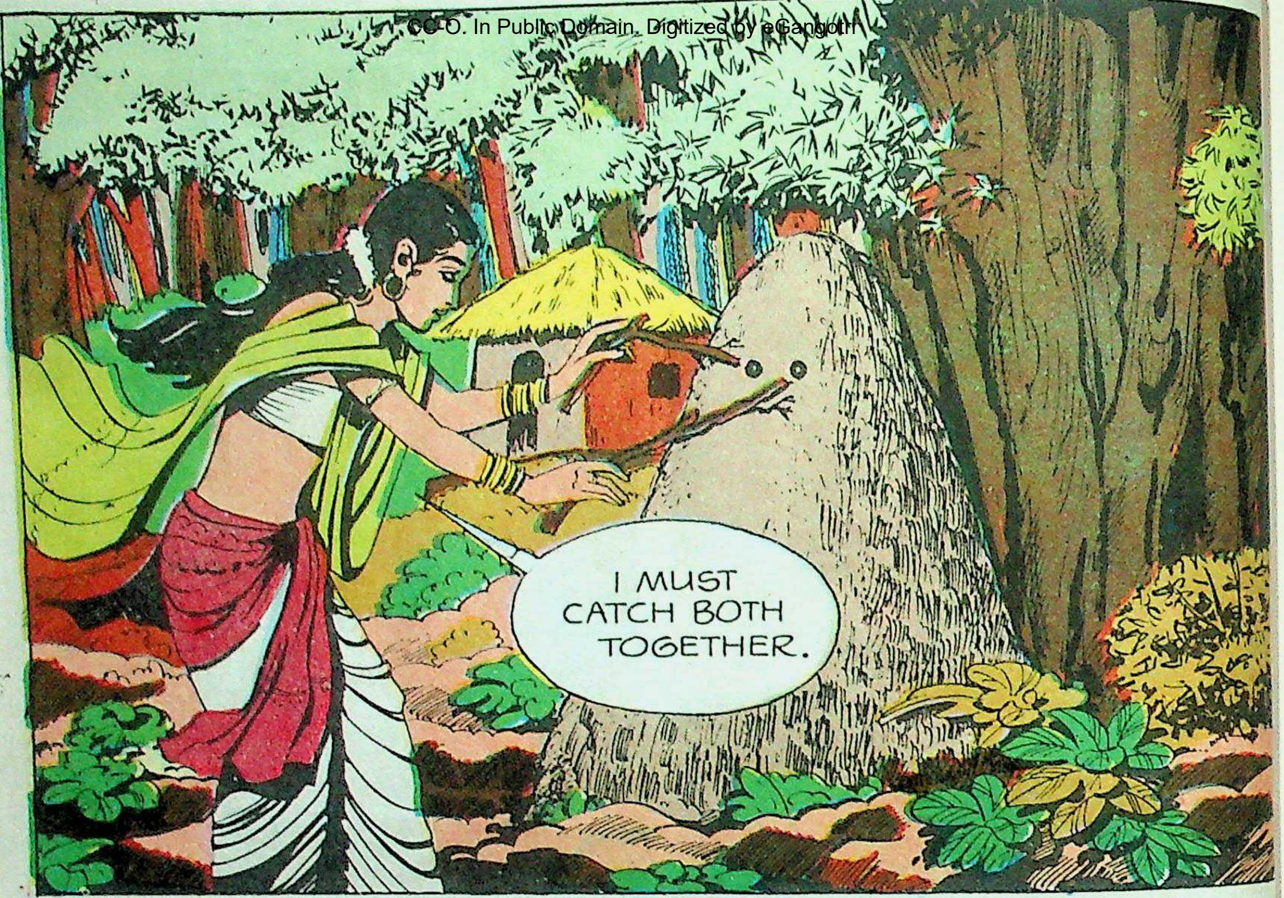

KING SHARYAATI HAD MANY BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS, BUT HE LOVED SUKANYA THE MOST. ONE DAY—
SUKANYA, WE WOULD ALL LOVE TO GO TO THE LAKE IN THE FOREST.
IF YOU ASK FATHER, HE WILL CERTAINLY TAKE US.
SUKANYA, PLEASE.
SUKANYA WENT TO SHARYAATI.
FATHER! WILL YOU PLEASE GRANT MY WISH?
HOW BEAUTIFUL SHE IS. SHE SHALL MARRY ONLY THE MOST HANDSOME, ACCOMPLISHED, PRINCE IN THE LAND.
CERTAINLY, MY CHILD. WHAT IS IT?

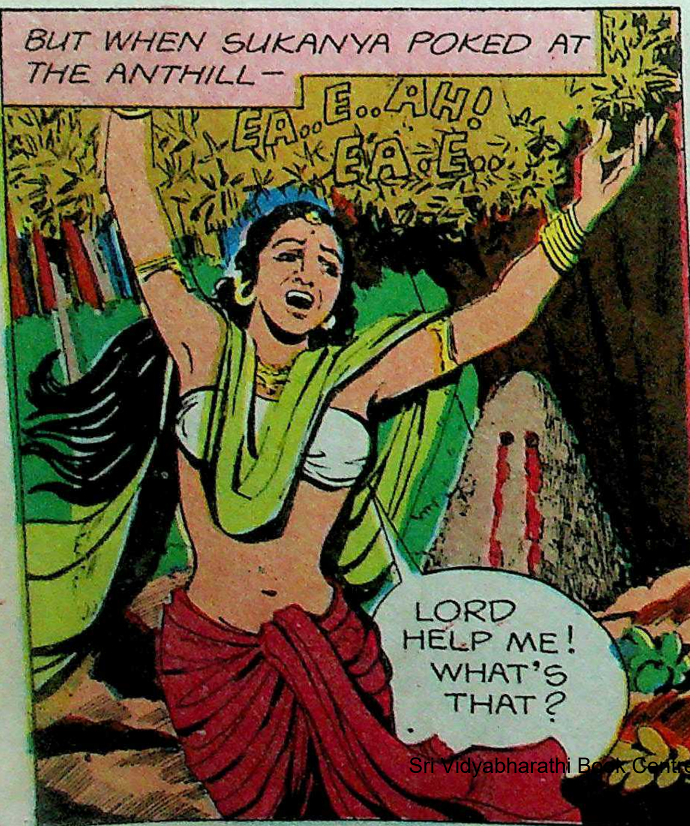

TAKE US TO THE LAKE, FATHER.

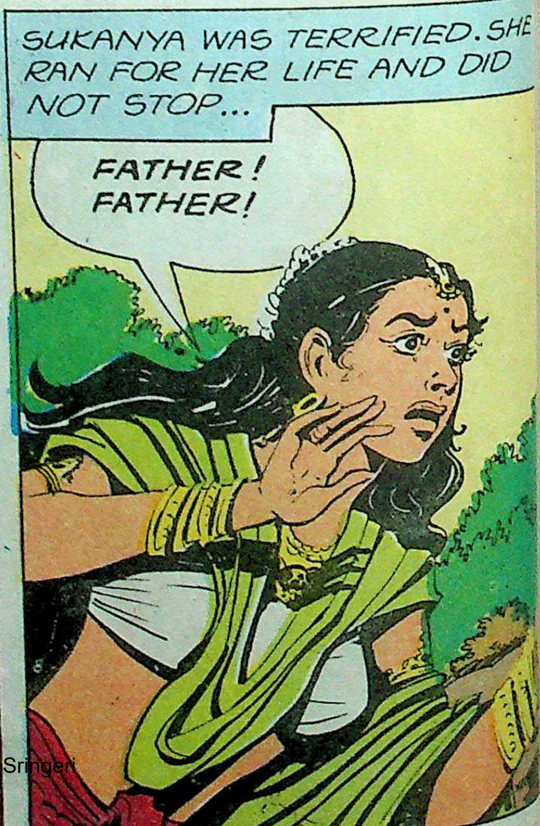

THEY LEFT FOR THE LAKE FOLLOWED BY A LARGE GROUP OF ATTENDANTS.

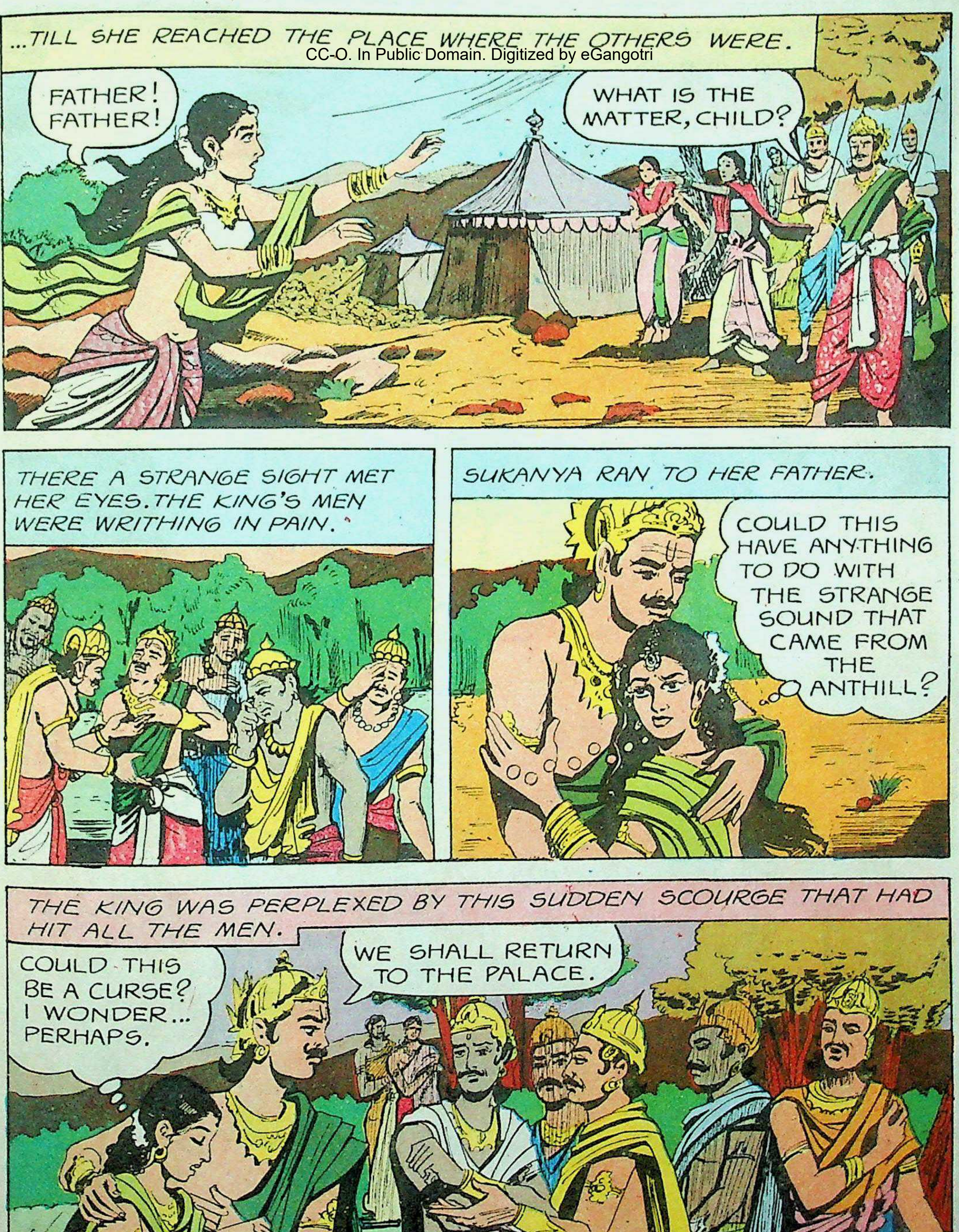

I'LL WANDER OFF TO MY FAVOURITE GROVE.
SUKANYA STRAYED AWAY FROM THE REST.

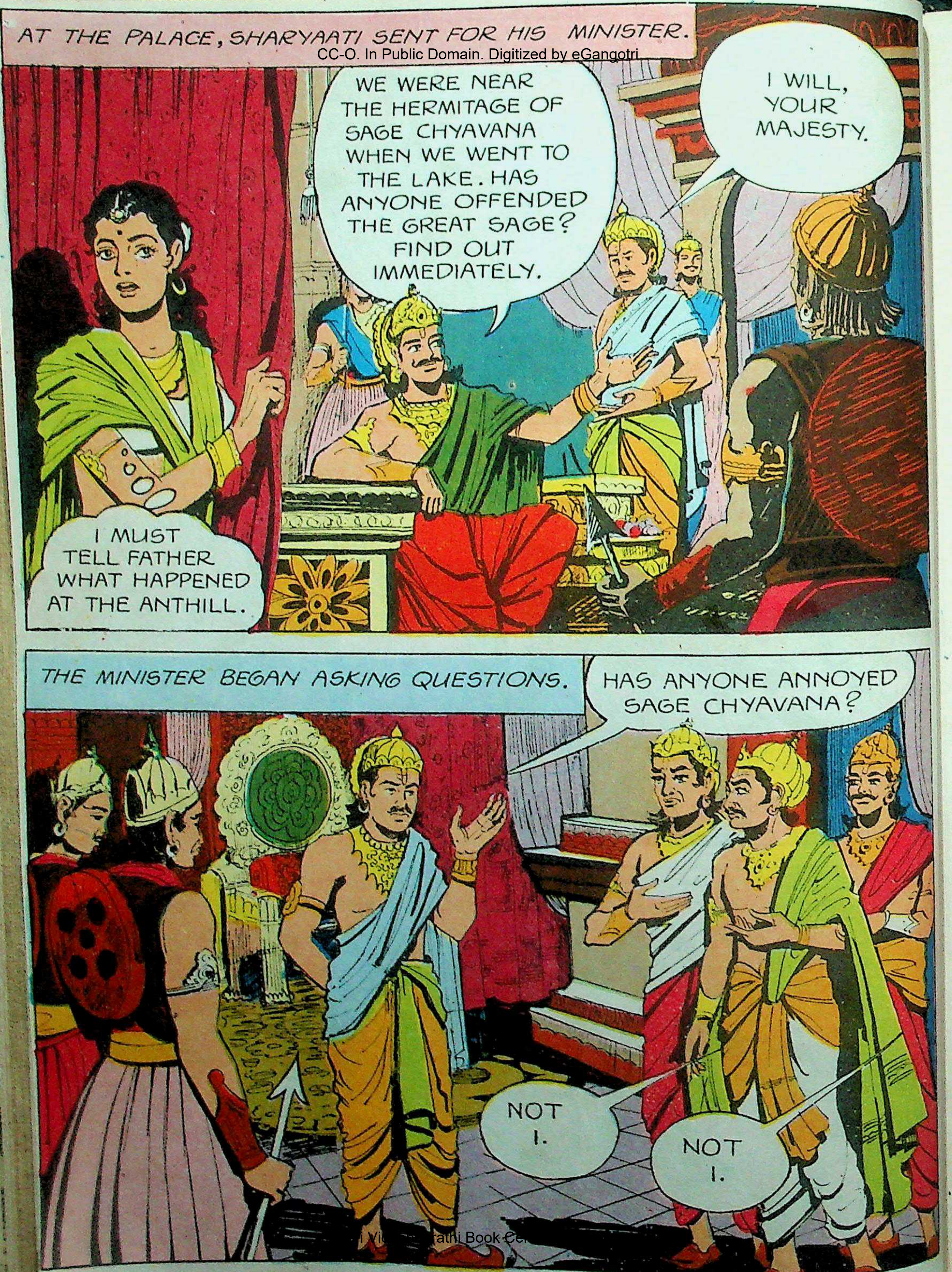

SUDDENLY SOMETHING IN THE DISTANCE ATTRACTED HER ATTENTION.
WHAT IS THAT? A HEAP OF MUD?
SHE CAME NEARER.
OH! IT'S AN ANTHILL. WHAT ARE THOSE SHINING OBJECTS?
COULD THEY BE FIREFLIES? I'LL DRIVE THEM OUT AND CATCH THEM. THE OTHERS WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO SEE THEM.

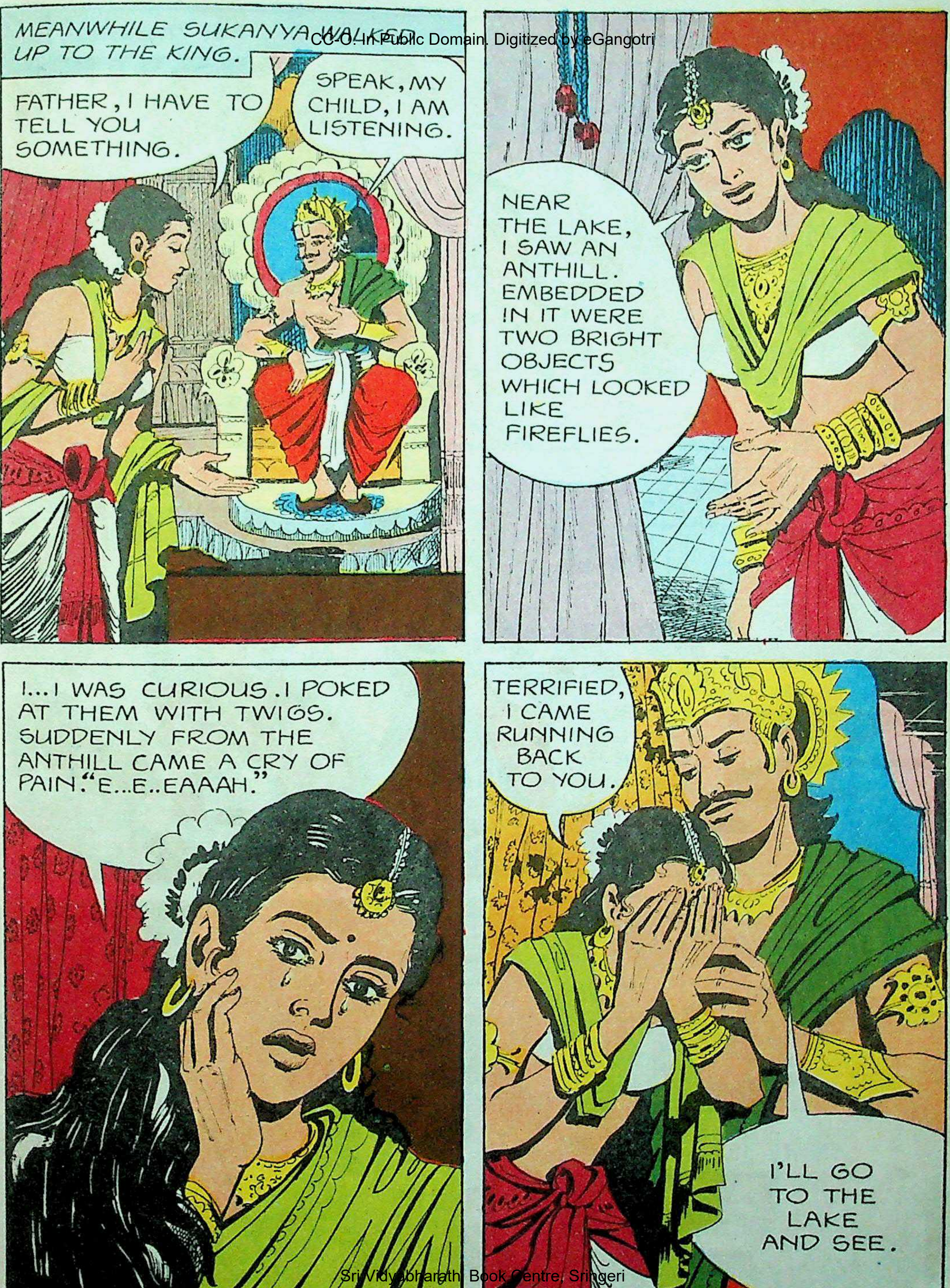

I MUST CATCH BOTH TOGETHER.

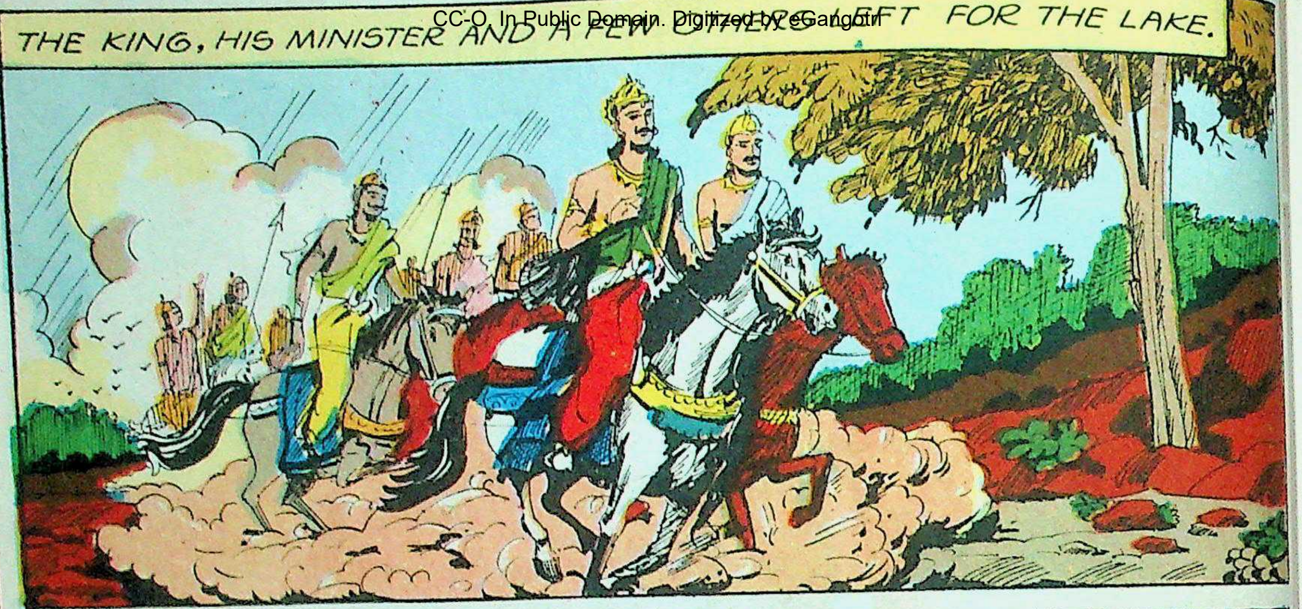

BUT WHEN SUKANYA POKED AT THE ANTHILL—
EA..E..AH! EA..E..
LORD HELP ME! WHAT'S THAT?

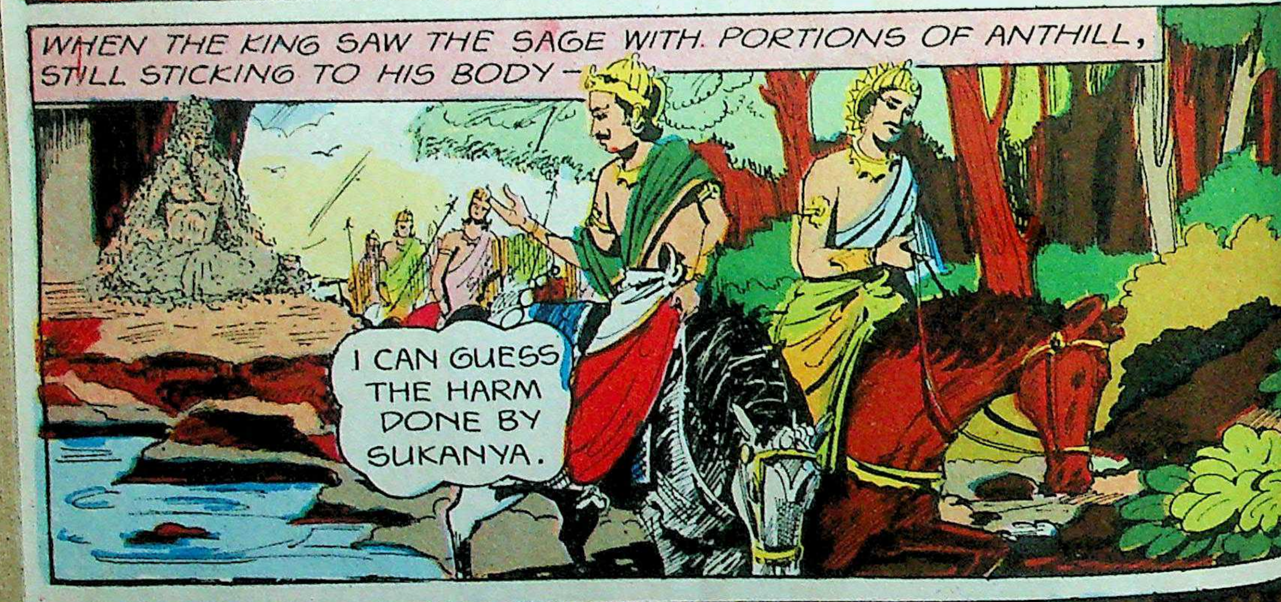

SUKANYA WAS TERRIFIED. SHE RAN FOR HER LIFE AND DID NOT STOP...
FATHER! FATHER!

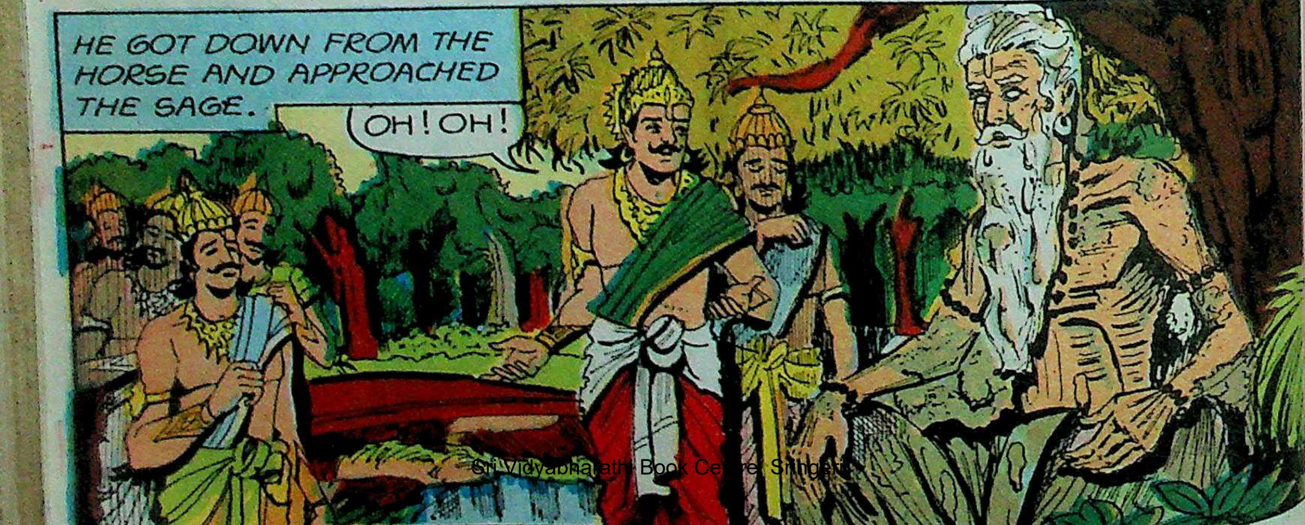

...TILL SHE REACHED THE PLACE WHERE THE OTHERS WERE.
FATHER! FATHER!
WHAT IS THE MATTER, CHILD?
THERE A STRANGE SIGHT MET HER EYES. THE KING'S MEN WERE WRITHING IN PAIN.
SUKANYA RAN TO HER FATHER.
COULD THIS HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE STRANGE SOUND THAT CAME FROM THE ANTHILL?
THE KING WAS PERPLEXED BY THIS SUDDEN SCOURGE THAT HAD HIT ALL THE MEN.
COULD THIS BE A CURSE? I WONDER... PERHAPS.
WE SHALL RETURN TO THE PALACE.

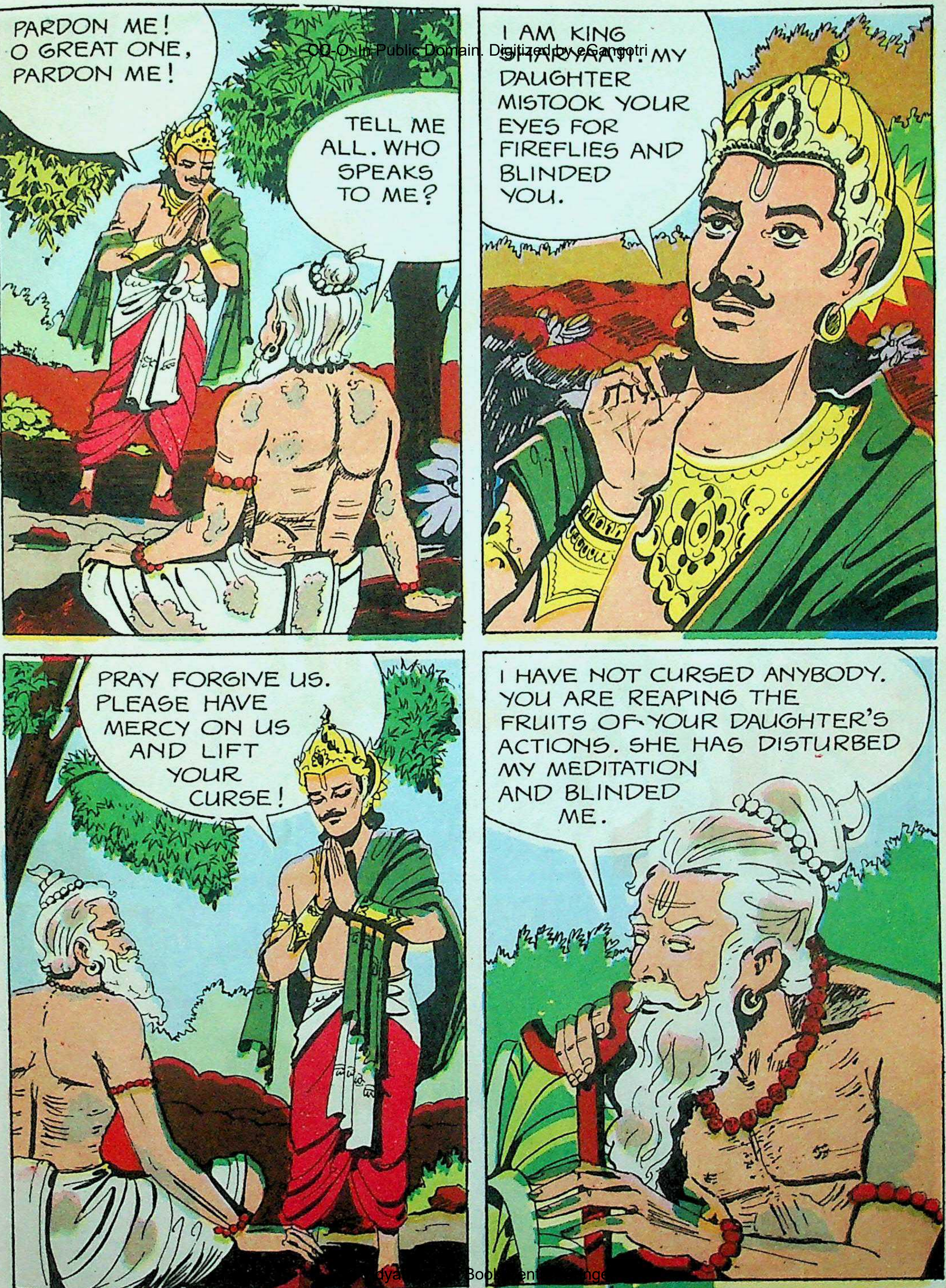

AT THE PALACE, SHARYAATI SENT FOR HIS MINISTER.
WE WERE NEAR THE HERMITAGE OF SAGE CHYAVANA WHEN WE WENT TO THE LAKE. HAS ANYONE OFFENDED THE GREAT SAGE? FIND OUT IMMEDIATELY.
I WILL, YOUR MAJESTY.
I MUST TELL FATHER WHAT HAPPENED AT THE ANTHILL.
THE MINISTER BEGAN ASKING QUESTIONS.
HAS ANYONE ANNOYED SAGE CHYAVANA?
NOT I.
NOT I.

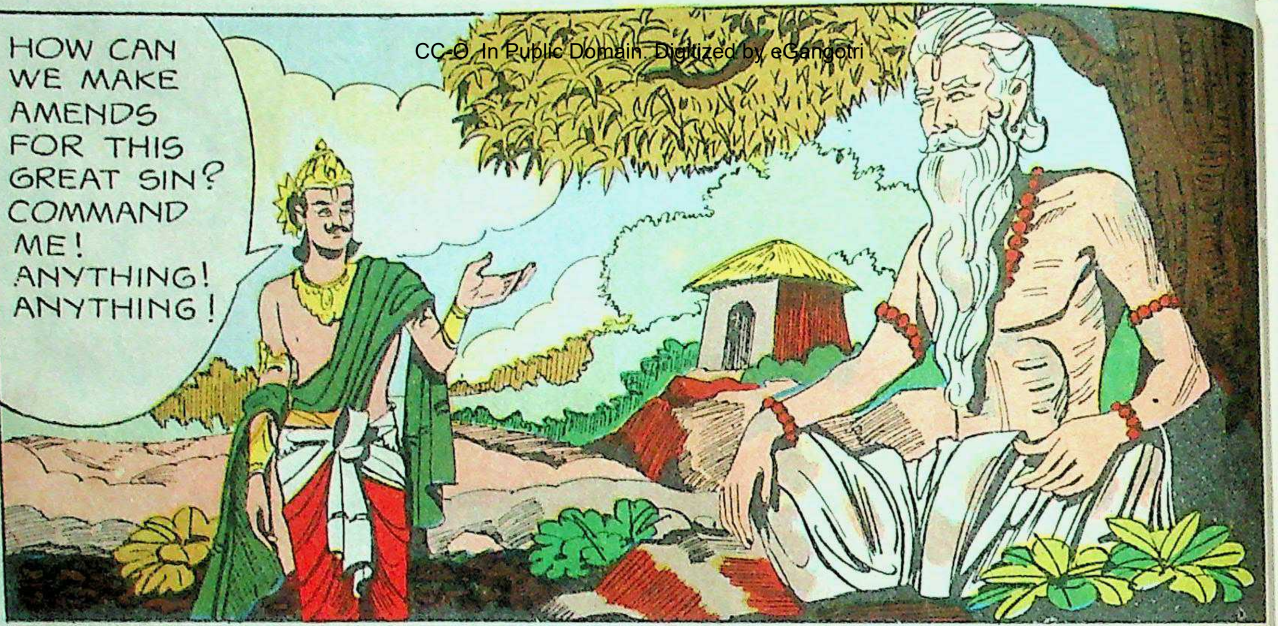

MEANWHILE SUKANYA WALKED UP TO THE KING.
FATHER, I HAVE TO TELL YOU SOMETHING.
SPEAK, MY CHILD, I AM LISTENING.
NEAR THE LAKE, I SAW AN ANTHILL. EMBEDDED IN IT WERE TWO BRIGHT OBJECTS WHICH LOOKED LIKE FIREFLIES.
I...I WAS CURIOUS. I POKED AT THEM WITH TWIGS. SUDDENLY FROM THE ANTHILL CAME A CRY OF PAIN. "E...E..EAAAH."
TERRIFIED, I CAME RUNNING BACK TO YOU.
I'LL GO TO THE LAKE AND SEE.

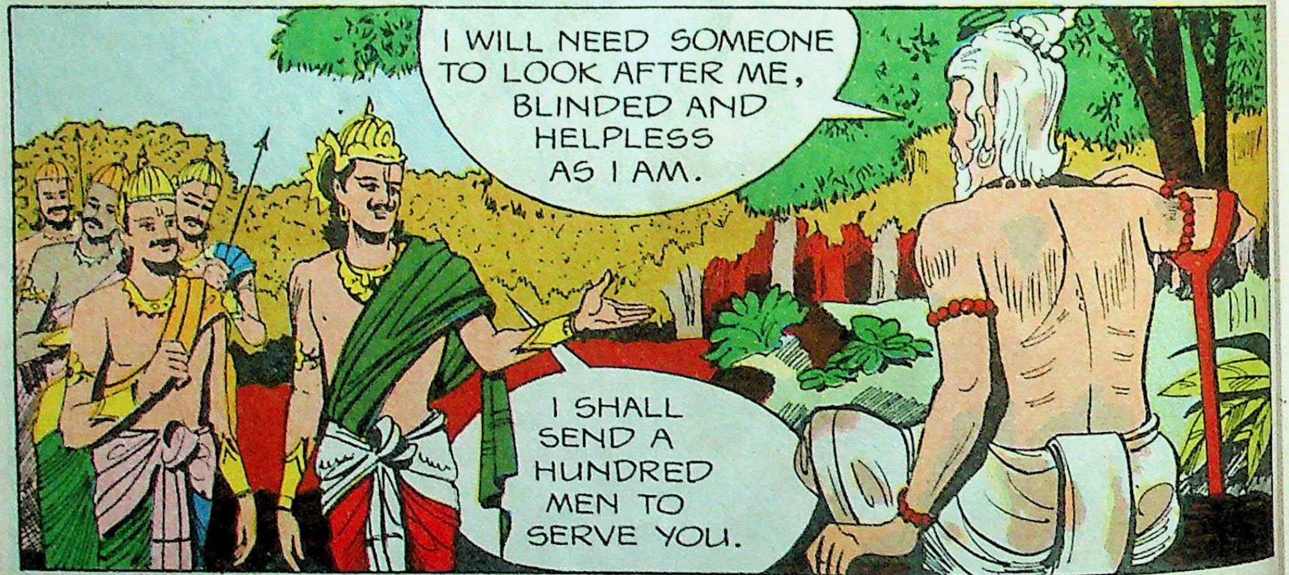

THE KING, HIS MINISTER AND A FEW OTHERS LEFT FOR THE LAKE.

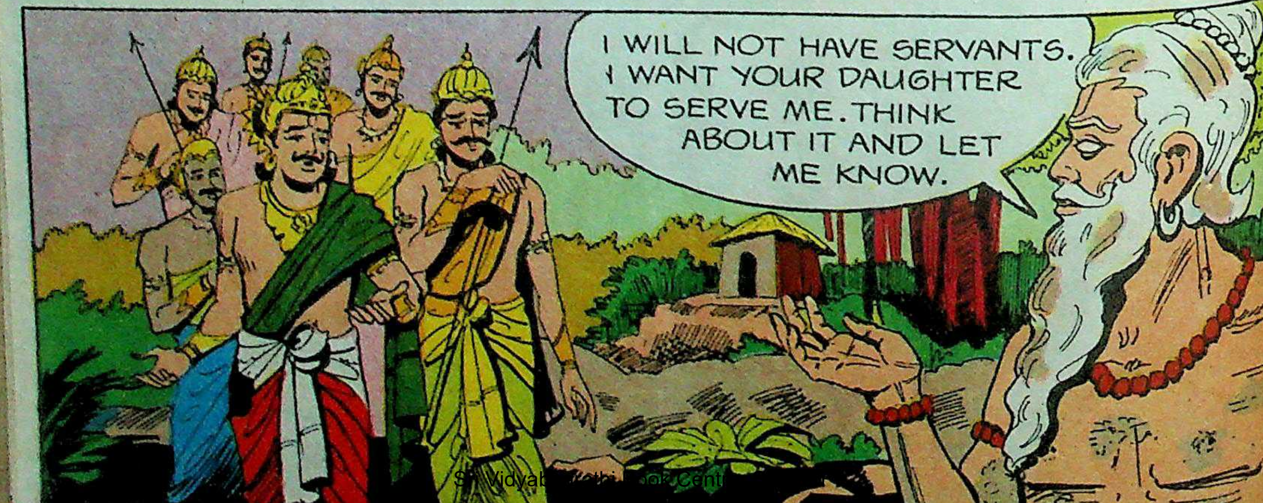

WHEN THE KING SAW THE SAGE WITH PORTIONS OF ANTHILL, STILL STICKING TO HIS BODY—
I CAN GUESS THE HARM DONE BY SUKANYA.

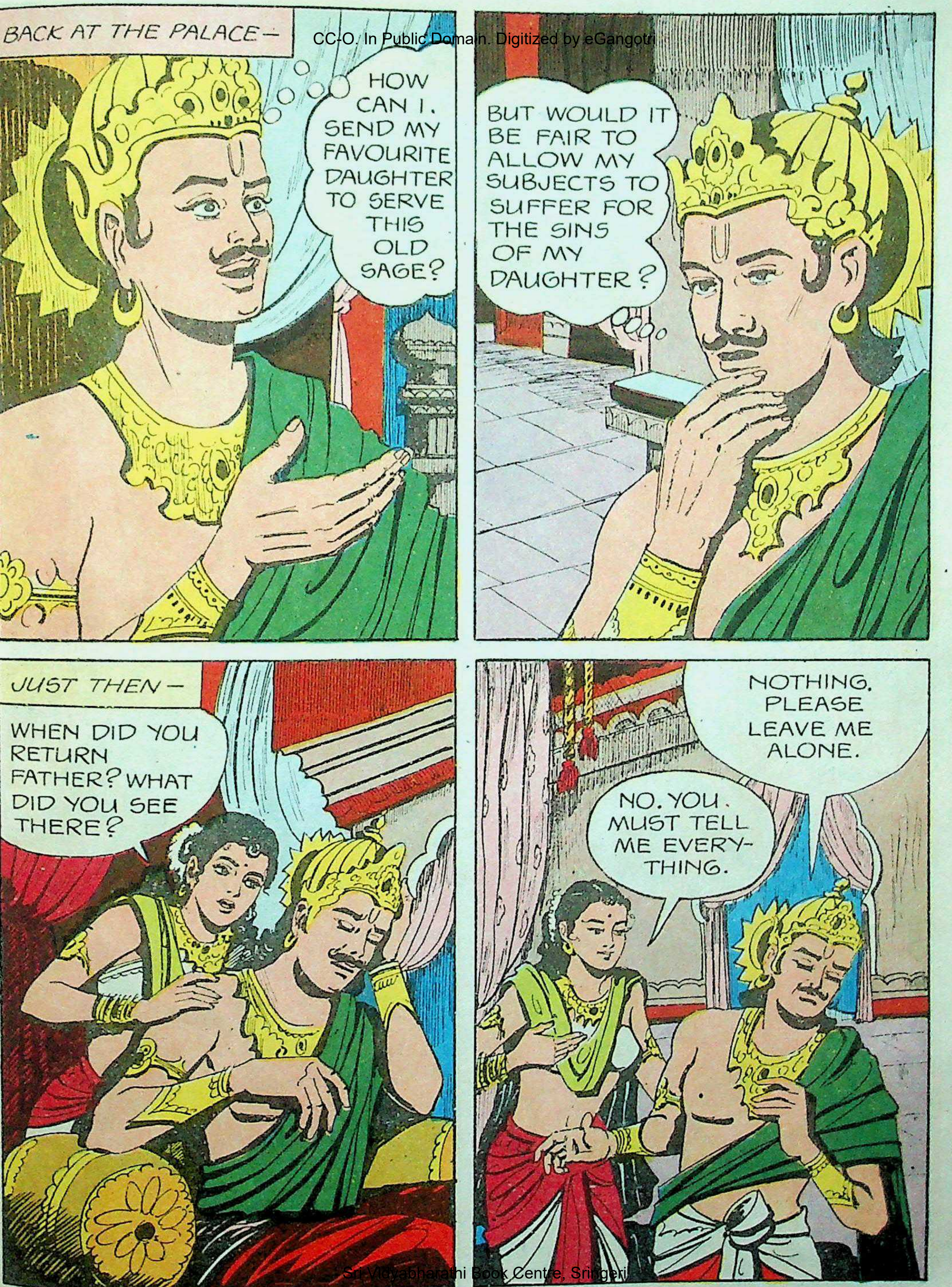

HE GOT DOWN FROM THE HORSE AND APPROACHED THE SAGE.
OH! OH!

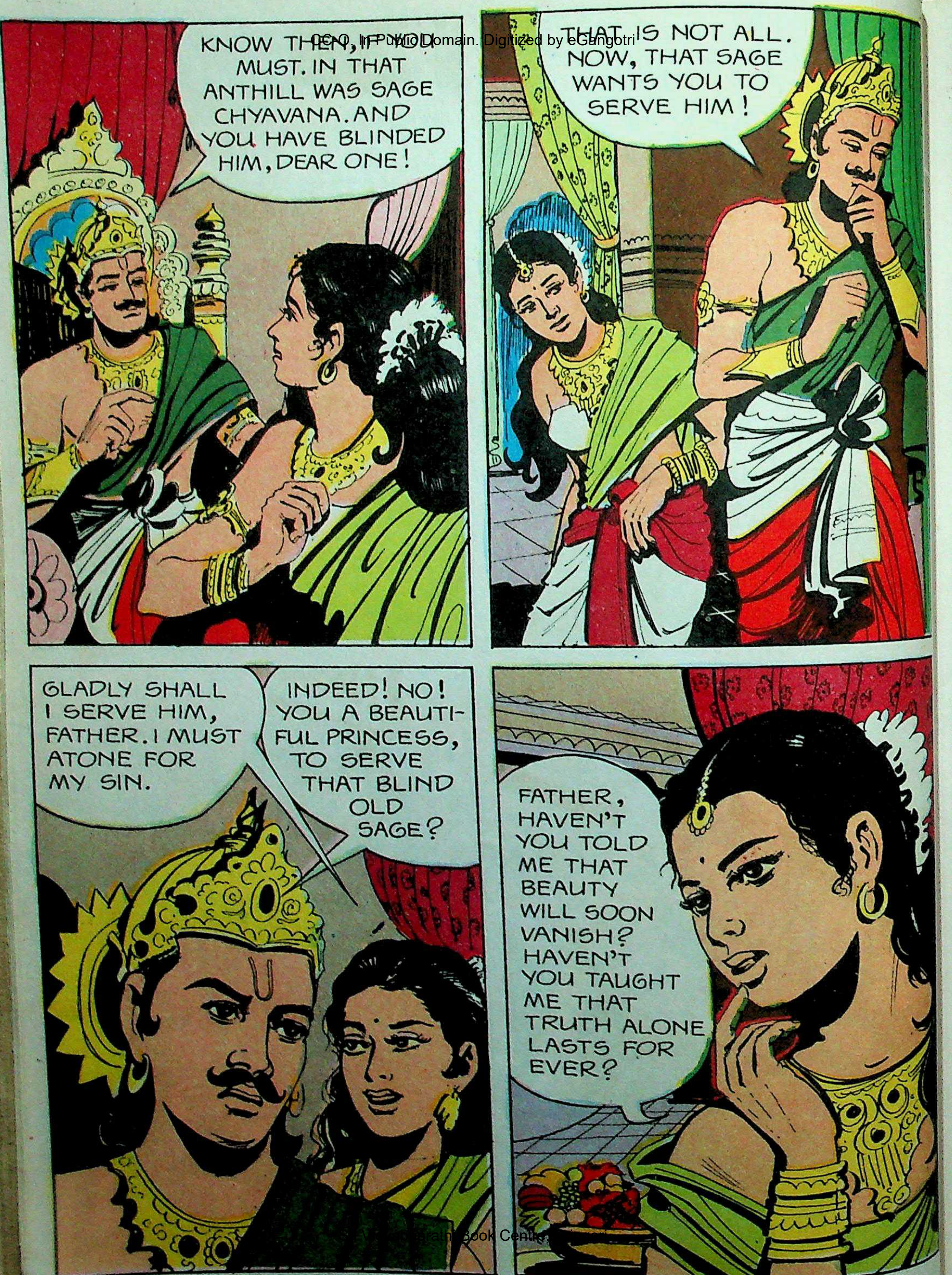

PARDON ME! O GREAT ONE, PARDON ME!
TELL ME ALL. WHO SPEAKS TO ME?
I AM KING SHARYAATI. MY DAUGHTER MISTOOK YOUR EYES FOR FIREFLIES AND BLINDED YOU.
PRAY FORGIVE US. PLEASE HAVE MERCY ON US AND LIFT YOUR CURSE!
I HAVE NOT CURSED ANYBODY. YOU ARE REAPING THE FRUITS OF YOUR DAUGHTER'S ACTIONS. SHE HAS DISTURBED MY MEDITATION AND BLINDED ME.


HOW CAN WE MAKE AMENDS FOR THIS GREAT SIN? COMMAND ME! ANYTHING! ANYTHING!

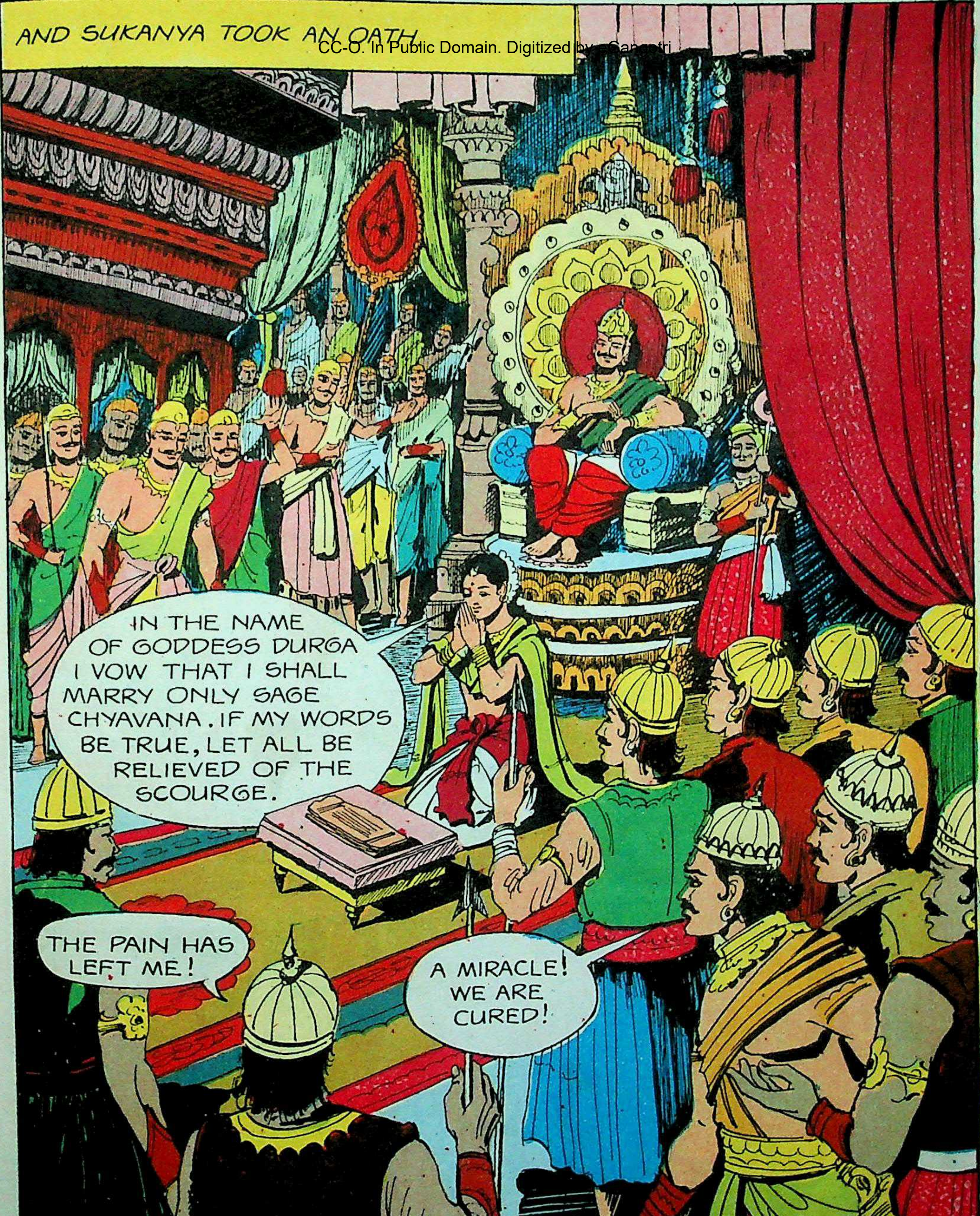

I WILL NEED SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER ME, BLINDED AND HELPLESS AS I AM.
I SHALL SEND A HUNDRED MEN TO SERVE YOU.


I WILL NOT HAVE SERVANTS. I WANT YOUR DAUGHTER TO SERVE ME. THINK ABOUT IT AND LET ME KNOW.

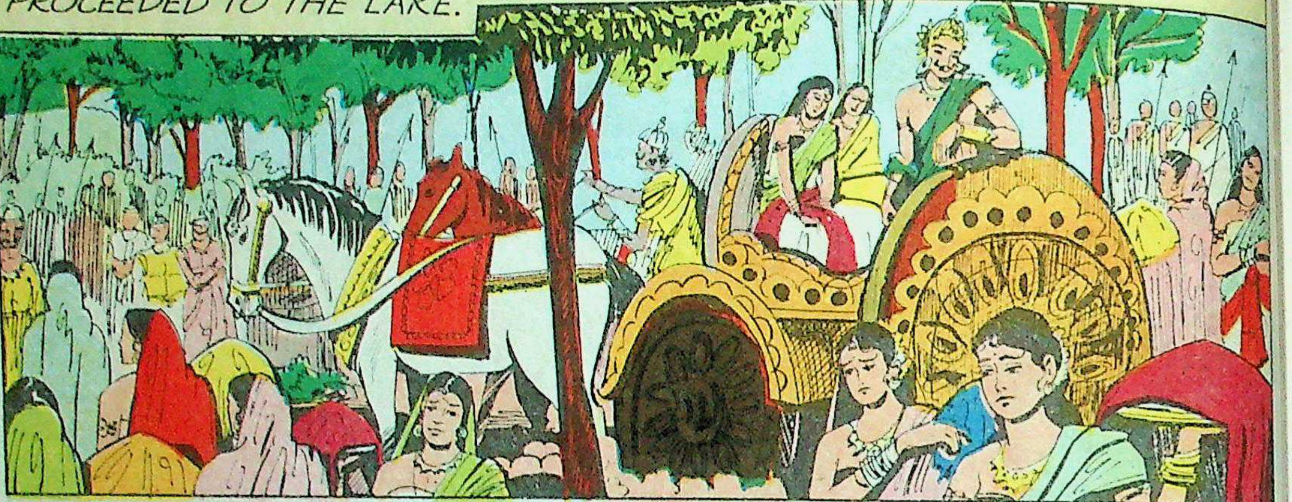

BACK AT THE PALACE—
HOW CAN I. SEND MY FAVOURITE DAUGHTER TO SERVE THIS OLD SAGE?
BUT WOULD IT BE FAIR TO ALLOW MY SUBJECTS TO SUFFER FOR THE SINS OF MY DAUGHTER?
JUST THEN—
WHEN DID YOU RETURN FATHER? WHAT DID YOU SEE THERE?
NOTHING. PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE.
NO. YOU. MUST TELL ME EVERYTHING.


KNOW THEN, IF YOU MUST. IN THAT ANTHILL WAS SAGE CHYAVANA. AND YOU HAVE BLINDED HIM, DEAR ONE!
THAT IS NOT ALL. NOW, THAT SAGE WANTS YOU TO SERVE HIM!
GLADLY SHALL I SERVE HIM, FATHER. I MUST ATONE FOR MY SIN.
INDEED! NO! YOU A BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS, TO SERVE THAT BLIND OLD SAGE?
FATHER, HAVEN'T YOU TOLD ME THAT BEAUTY WILL SOON VANISH? HAVEN'T YOU TAUGHT ME THAT TRUTH ALONE LASTS FOR EVER?

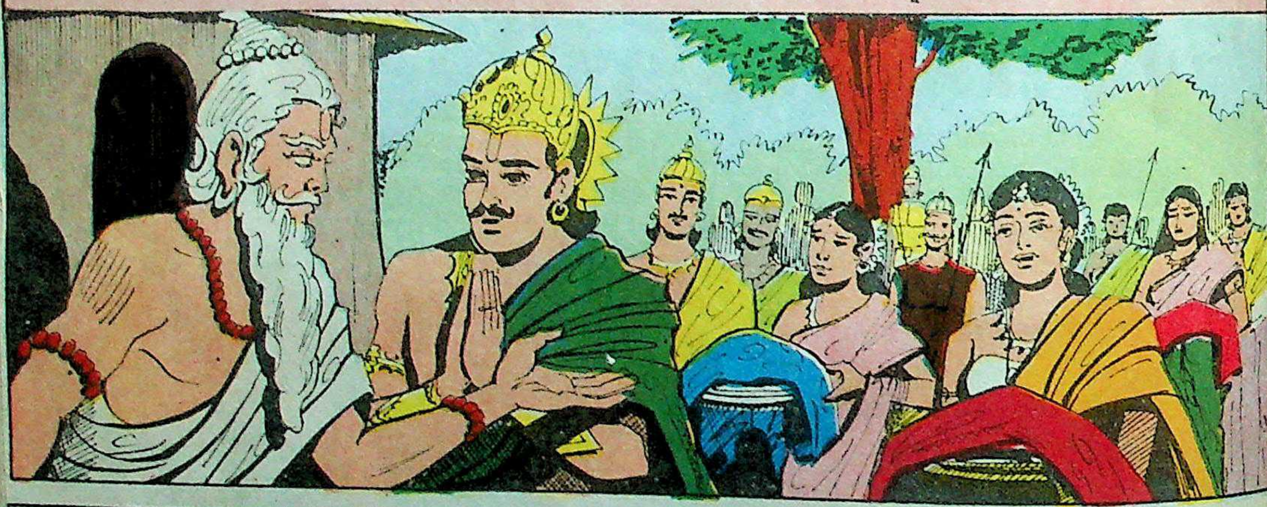
Bharath Book Centre


AND SUKANYA TOOK AN OATH
IN THE NAME OF GODDESS DURGA I VOW THAT I SHALL MARRY ONLY SAGE CHYAVANA. IF MY WORDS BE TRUE, LET ALL BE RELIEVED OF THE SCOURGE.
THE PAIN HAS LEFT ME!
A MIRACLE! WE ARE CURED!

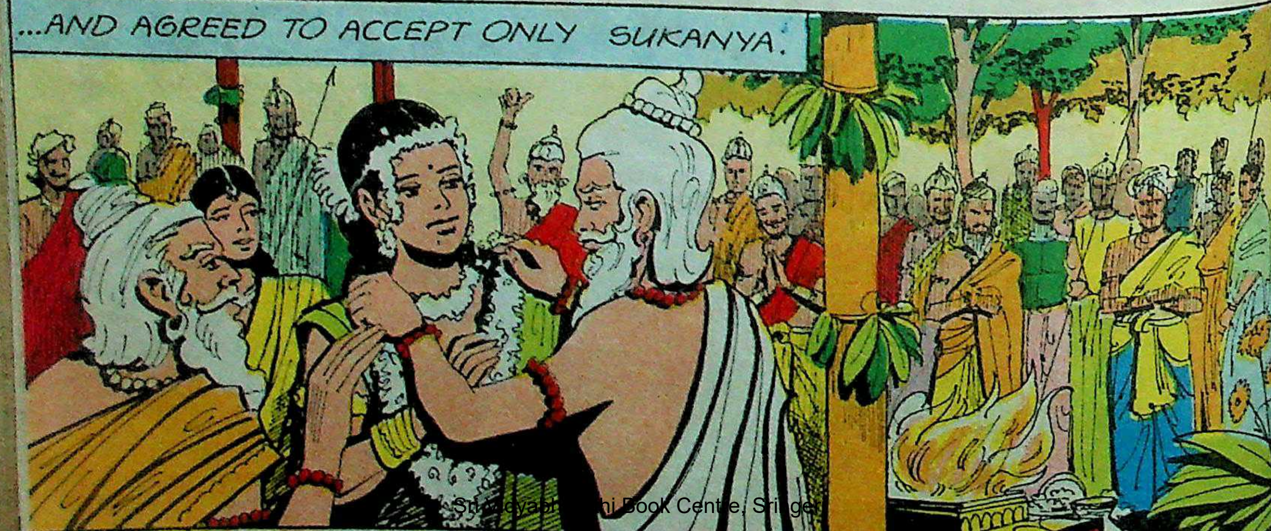
THEN SHARYAATI, SUKANYA AND THE MINISTER, FOLLOWED BY A GROUP OF SERVANTS CARRYING RICH PRESENTS FOR THE BRIDEGROOM, PROCEEDED TO THE LAKE.



SAGE CHYAVANA REFUSED THE ROYAL GIFTS...



...AND AGREED TO ACCEPT ONLY SUKANYA.



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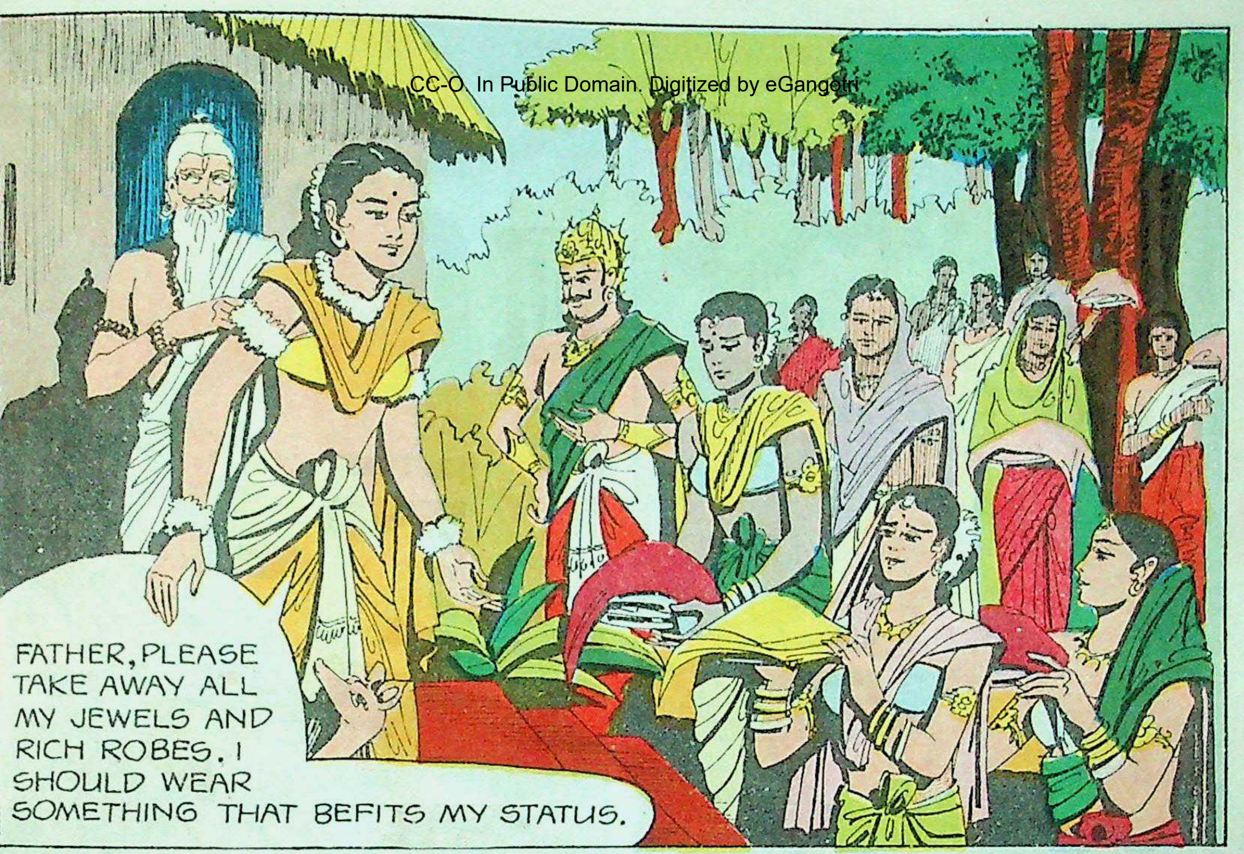
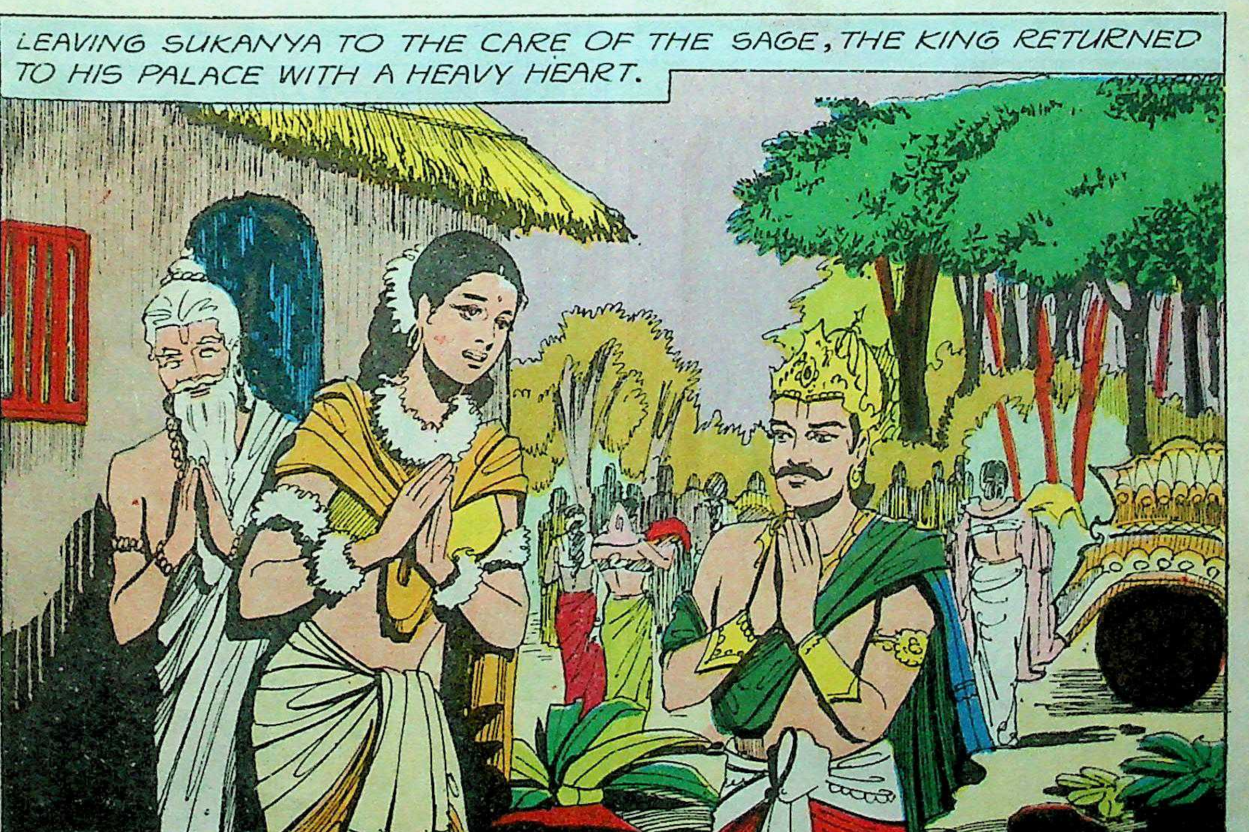
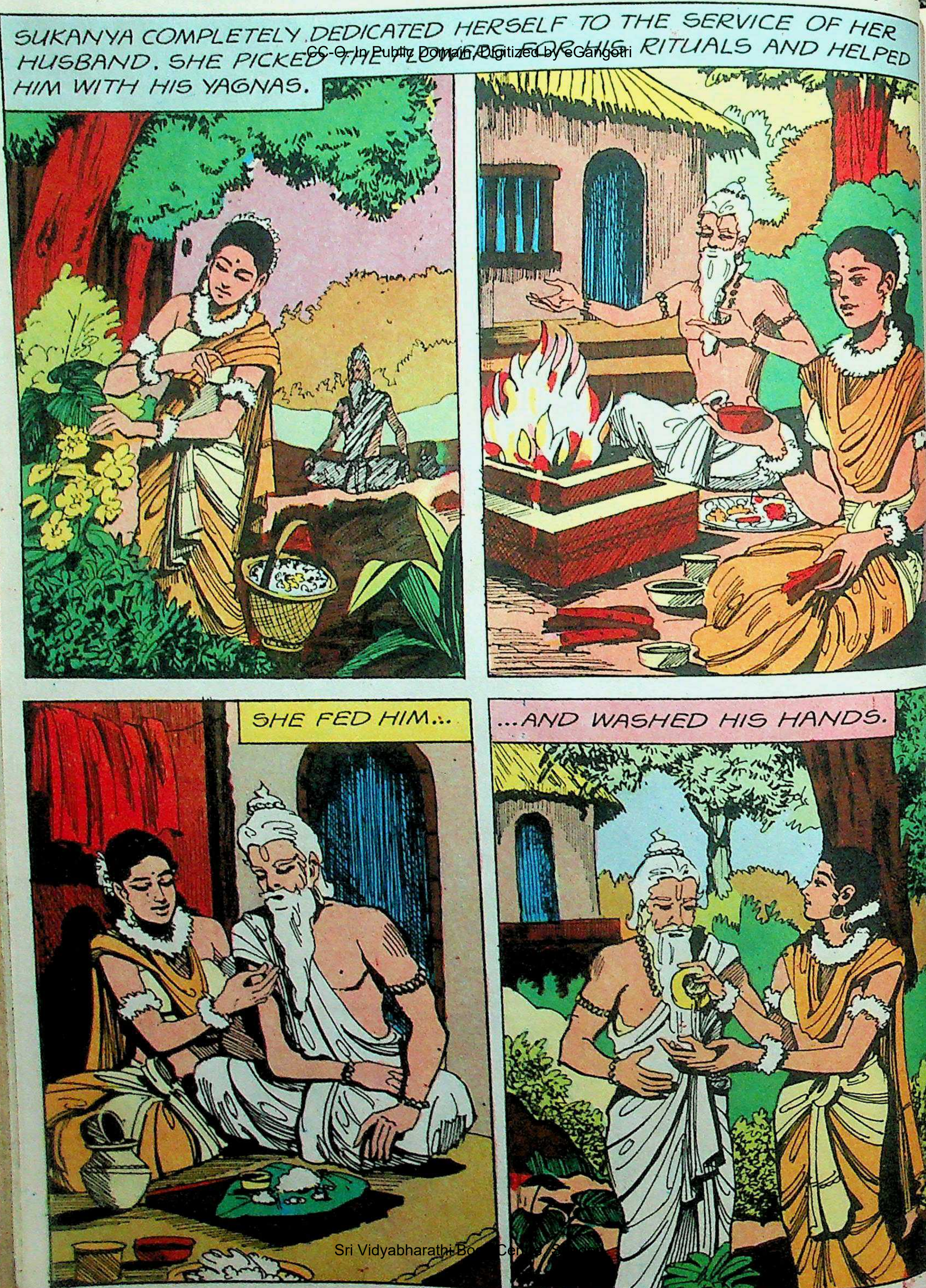
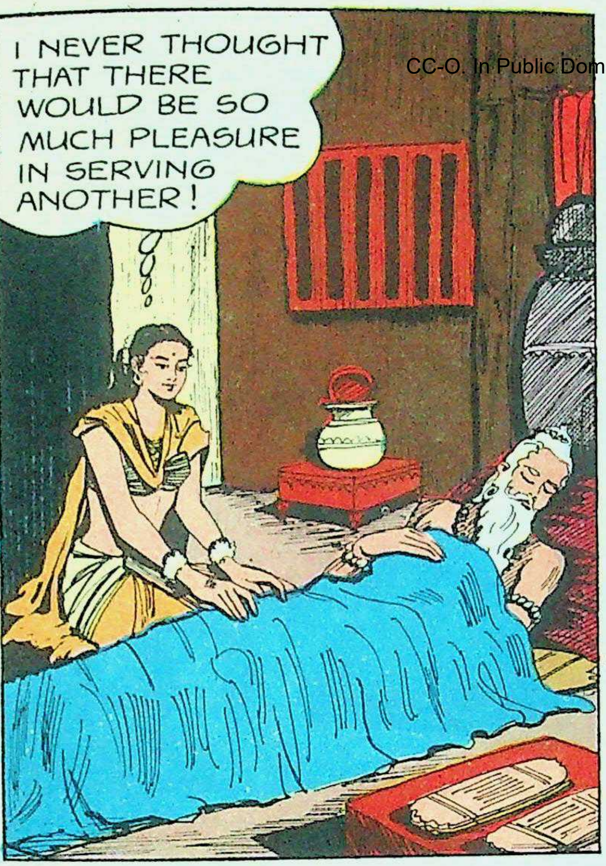
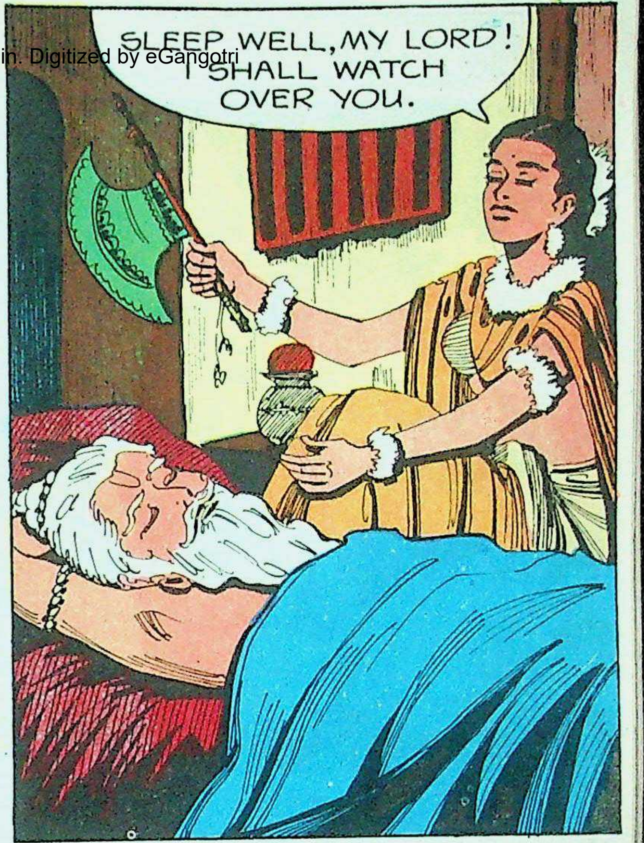
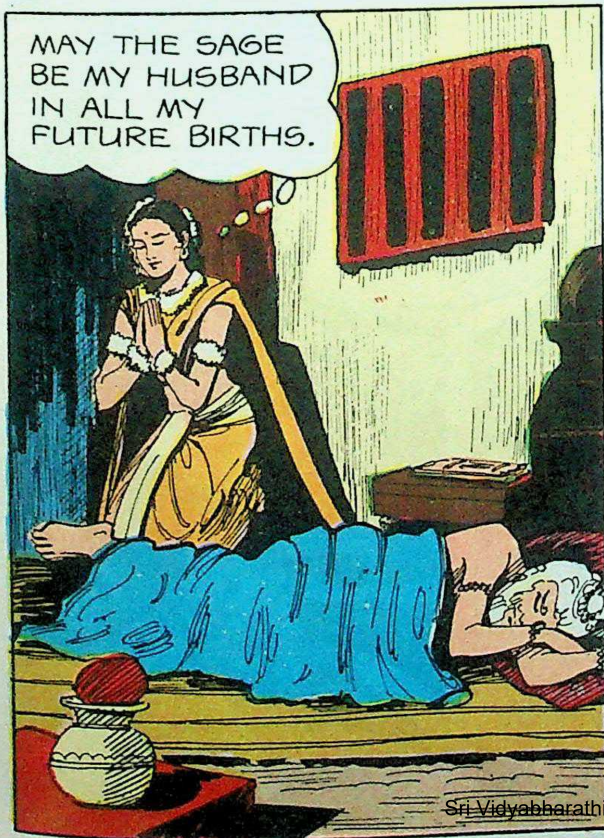

FATHER, PLEASE TAKE AWAY ALL MY JEWELS AND RICH ROBES. I SHOULD WEAR SOMETHING THAT BEFITS MY STATUS.

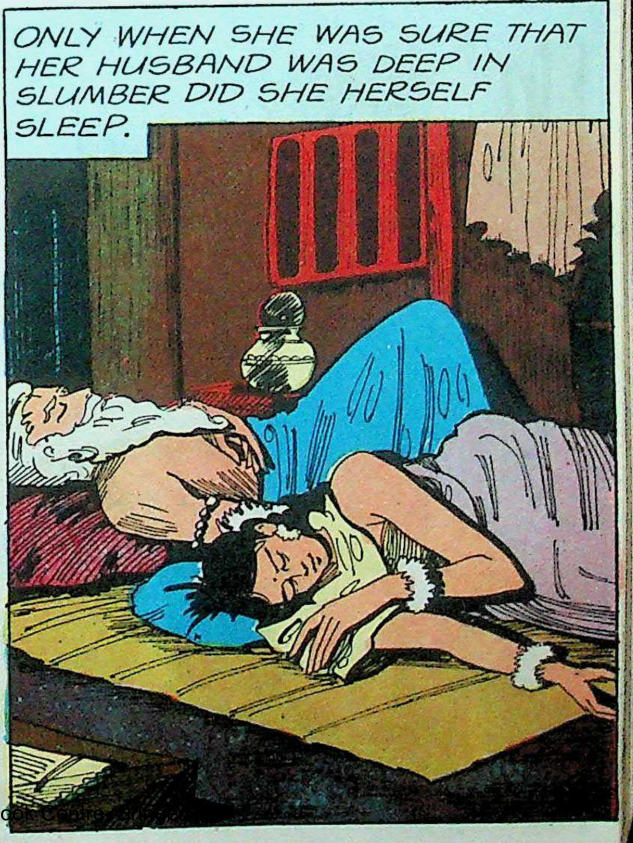

LEAVING SUKANYA TO THE CARE OF THE SAGE, THE KING RETURNED TO HIS PALACE WITH A HEAVY HEART.

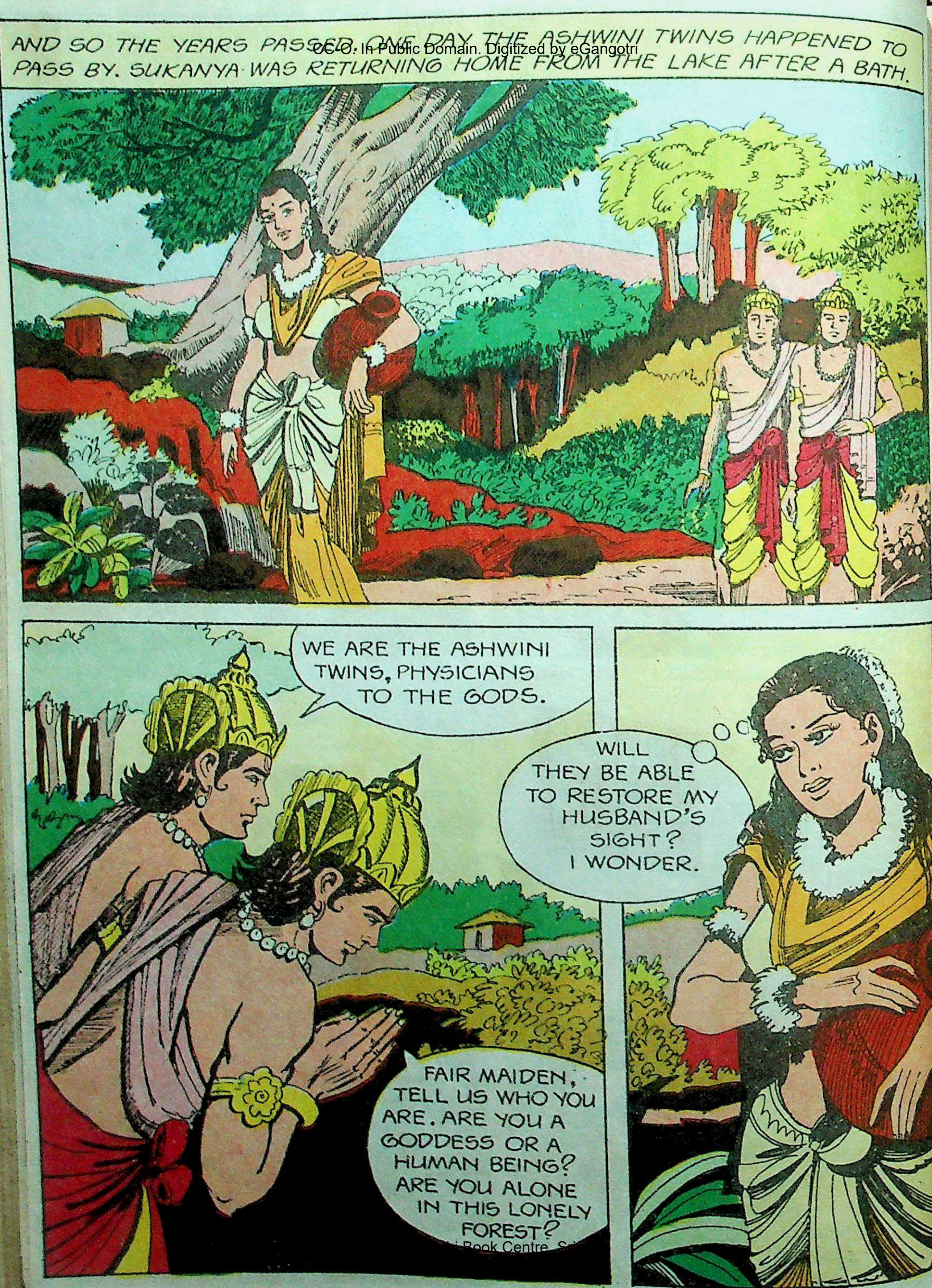

SUKANYA COMPLETELY DEDICATED HERSELF TO THE SERVICE OF HER HUSBAND. SHE PICKED THE FLOWERS FOR HIS RITUALS AND HELPED HIM WITH HIS YAGNAS.
SHE FED HIM...
...AND WASHED HIS HANDS.

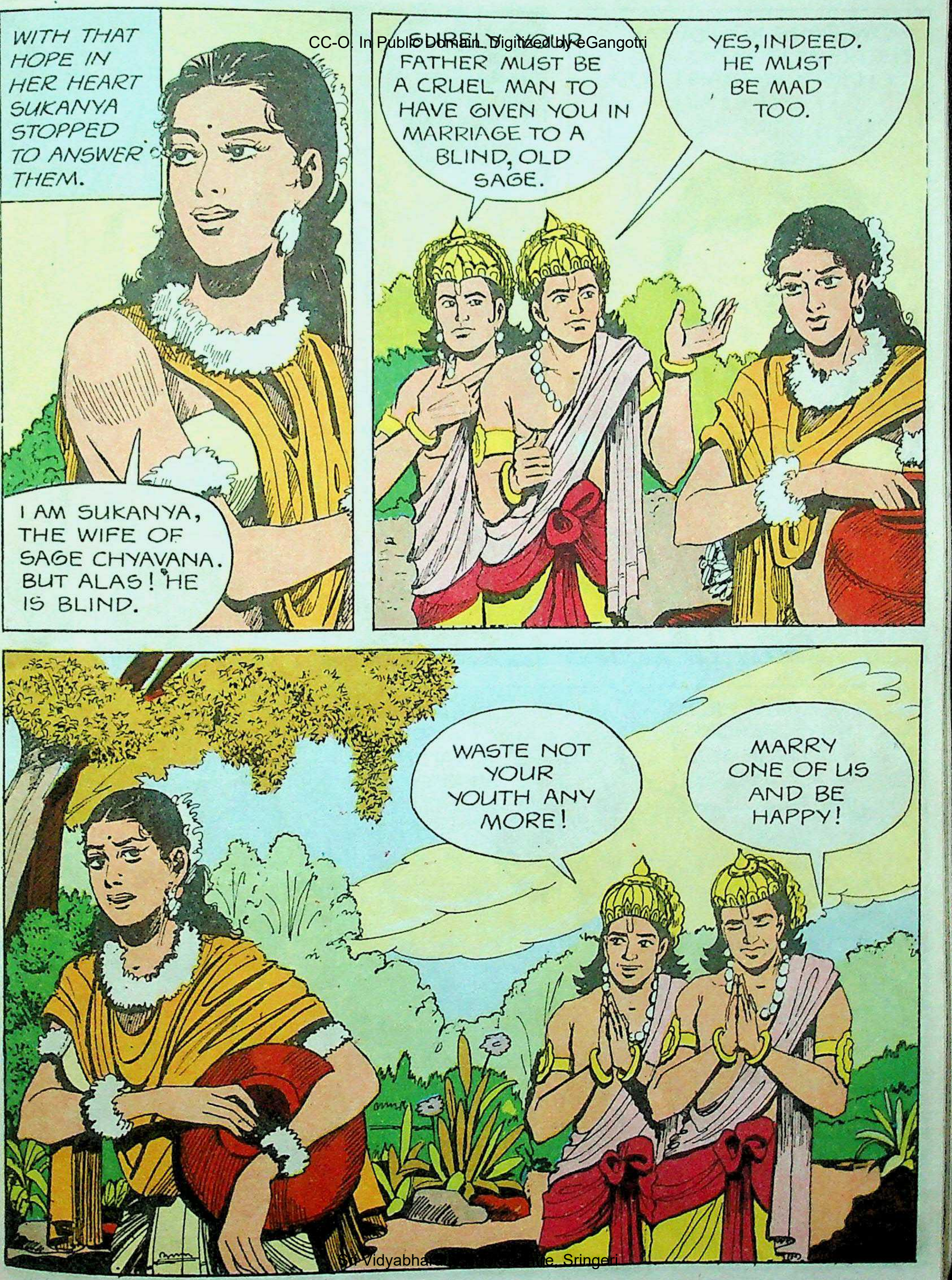

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE SO MUCH PLEASURE IN SERVING ANOTHER!


SLEEP WELL, MY LORD! I SHALL WATCH OVER YOU.

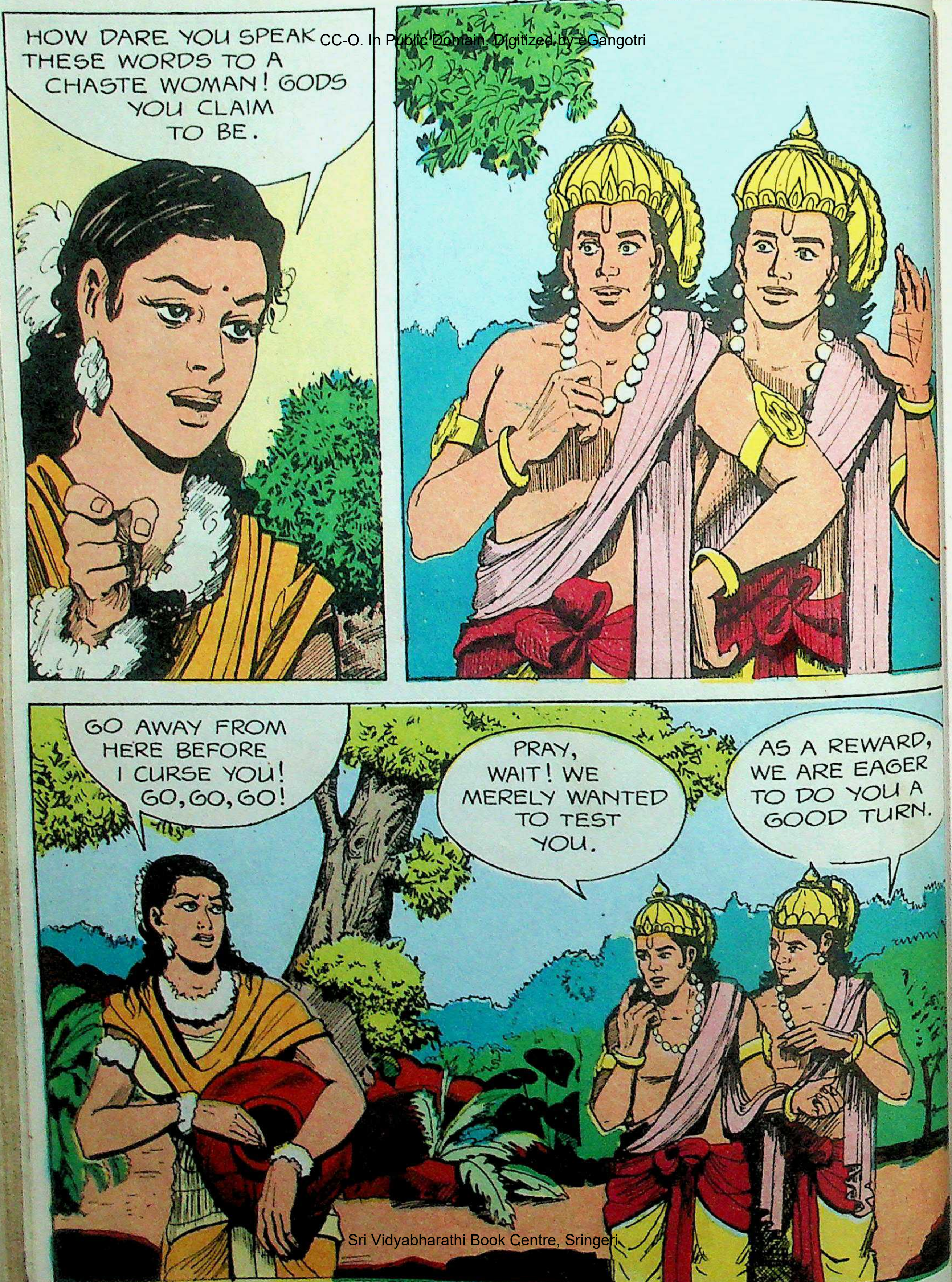

MAY THE SAGE BE MY HUSBAND IN ALL MY FUTURE BIRTHS.

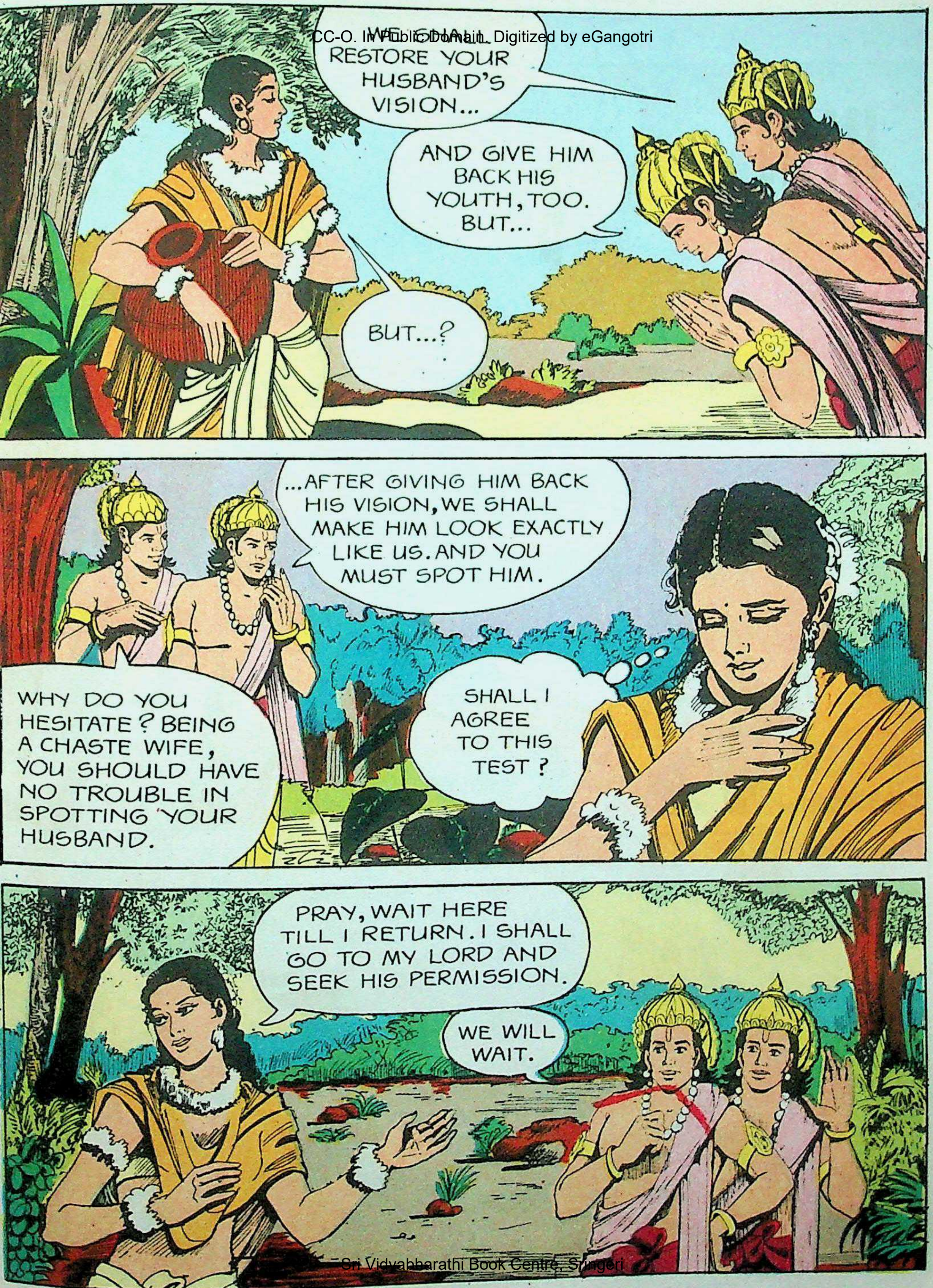

ONLY WHEN SHE WAS SURE THAT HER HUSBAND WAS DEEP IN SLUMBER DID SHE HERSELF SLEEP.


AND SO THE YEARS PASSED. ONE DAY THE ASHWINI TWINS HAPPENED TO PASS BY. SUKANYA WAS RETURNING HOME FROM THE LAKE AFTER A BATH.
WE ARE THE ASHWINI TWINS, PHYSICIANS TO THE GODS.
FAIR MAIDEN, TELL US WHO YOU ARE. ARE YOU A GODDESS OR A HUMAN BEING? ARE YOU ALONE IN THIS LONELY FOREST?
WILL THEY BE ABLE TO RESTORE MY HUSBAND'S SIGHT? I WONDER.

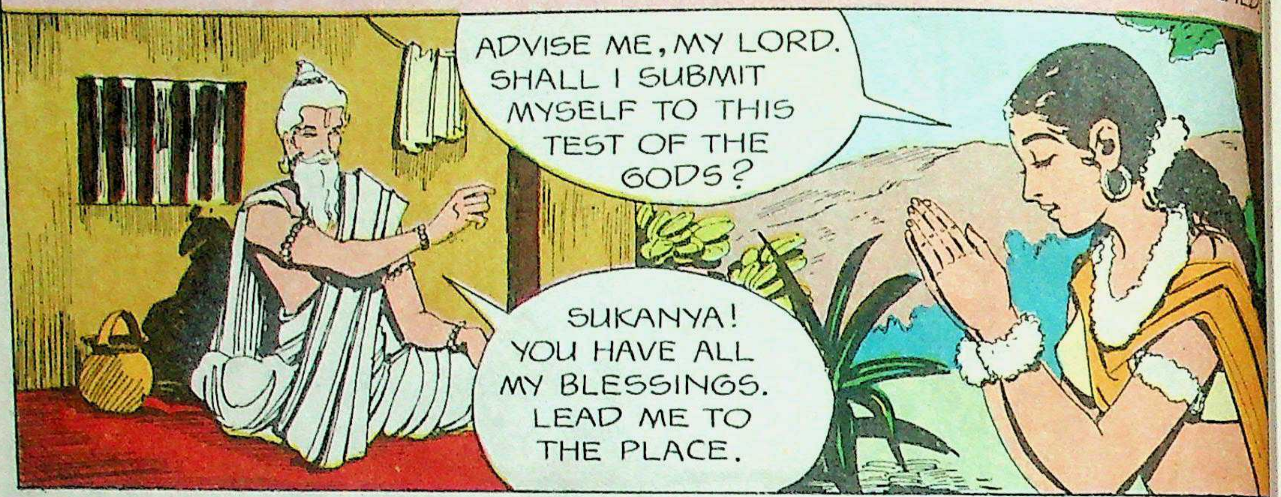

WITH THAT HOPE IN HER HEART SUKANYA STOPPED TO ANSWER THEM.
I AM SUKANYA, THE WIFE OF SAGE CHYAVANA. BUT ALAS! HE IS BLIND.
SURELY YOUR FATHER MUST BE A CRUEL MAN TO HAVE GIVEN YOU IN MARRIAGE TO A BLIND, OLD SAGE.
YES, INDEED. HE MUST BE MAD TOO.
WASTE NOT YOUR YOUTH ANY MORE!
MARRY ONE OF US AND BE HAPPY!

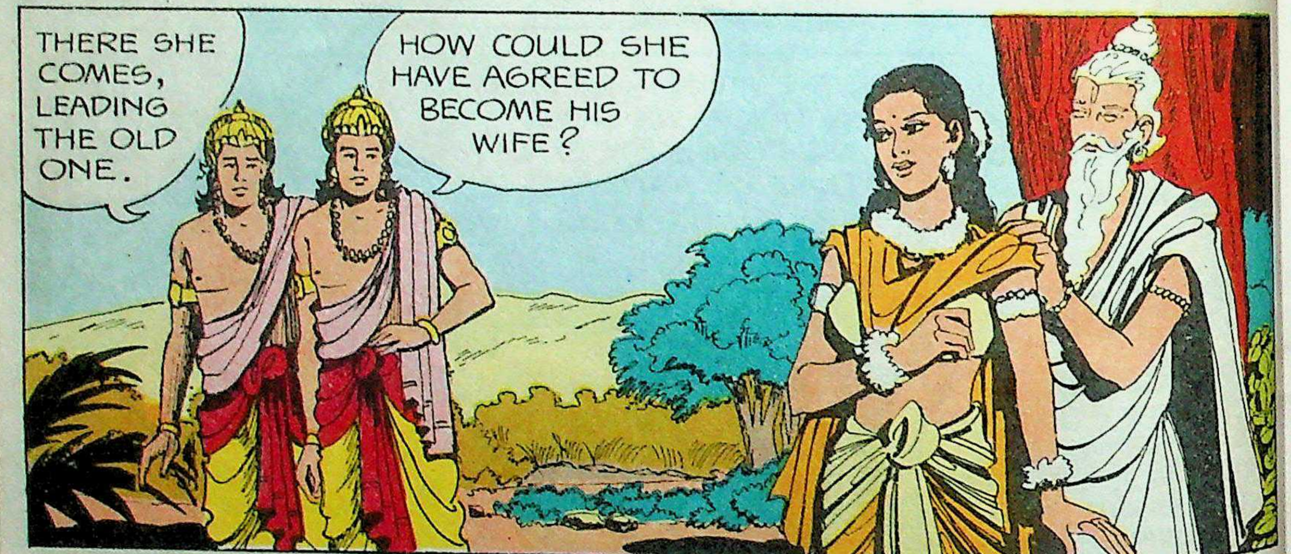
Sri Vidyabha... Sringeri

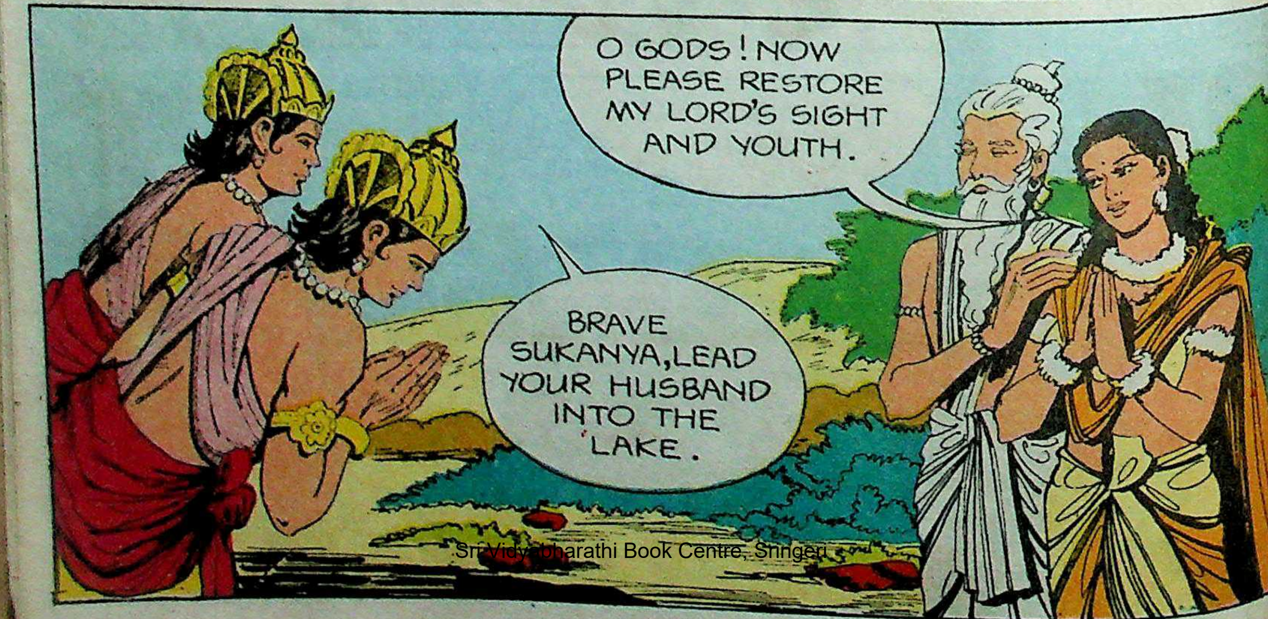

HOW DARE YOU SPEAK THESE WORDS TO A CHASTE WOMAN! GODS YOU CLAIM TO BE.
GO AWAY FROM HERE BEFORE I CURSE YOU! GO, GO, GO!
PRAY, WAIT! WE MERELY WANTED TO TEST YOU.
AS A REWARD, WE ARE EAGER TO DO YOU A GOOD TURN.

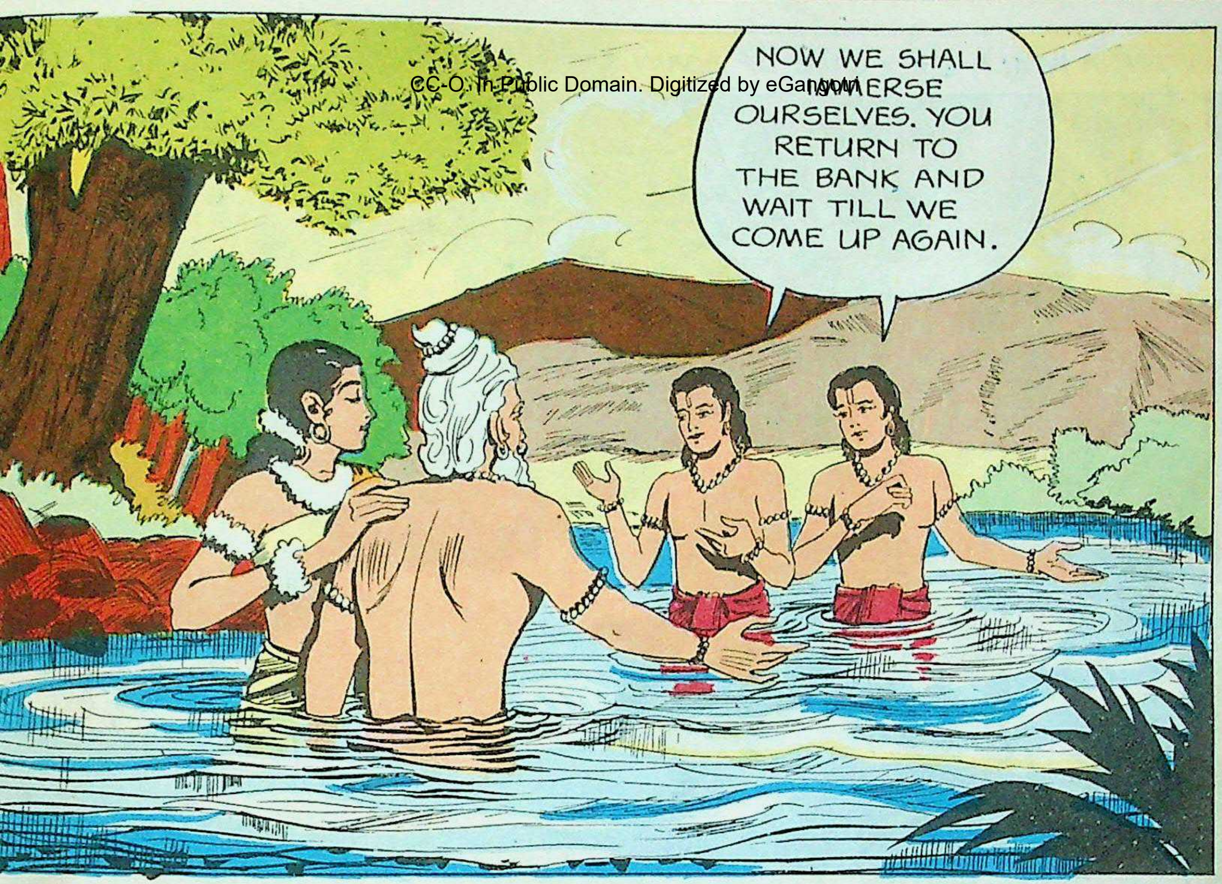

WE SHALL RESTORE YOUR HUSBAND'S VISION...
AND GIVE HIM BACK HIS YOUTH, TOO. BUT...
BUT...?
...AFTER GIVING HIM BACK HIS VISION, WE SHALL MAKE HIM LOOK EXACTLY LIKE US. AND YOU MUST SPOT HIM.
WHY DO YOU HESITATE? BEING A CHASTE WIFE, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE IN SPOTTING YOUR HUSBAND.
SHALL I AGREE TO THIS TEST?
PRAY, WAIT HERE TILL I RETURN. I SHALL GO TO MY LORD AND SEEK HIS PERMISSION.
WE WILL WAIT.

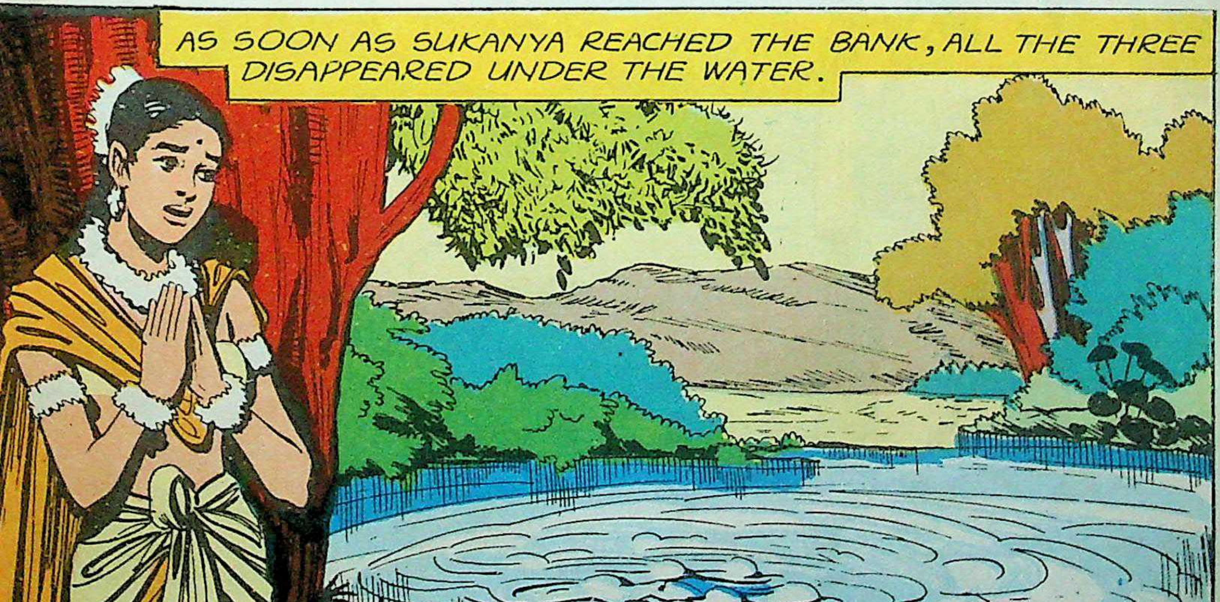
BACK AT THE ASHRAM, SUKANYA TOLD HER HUSBAND ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

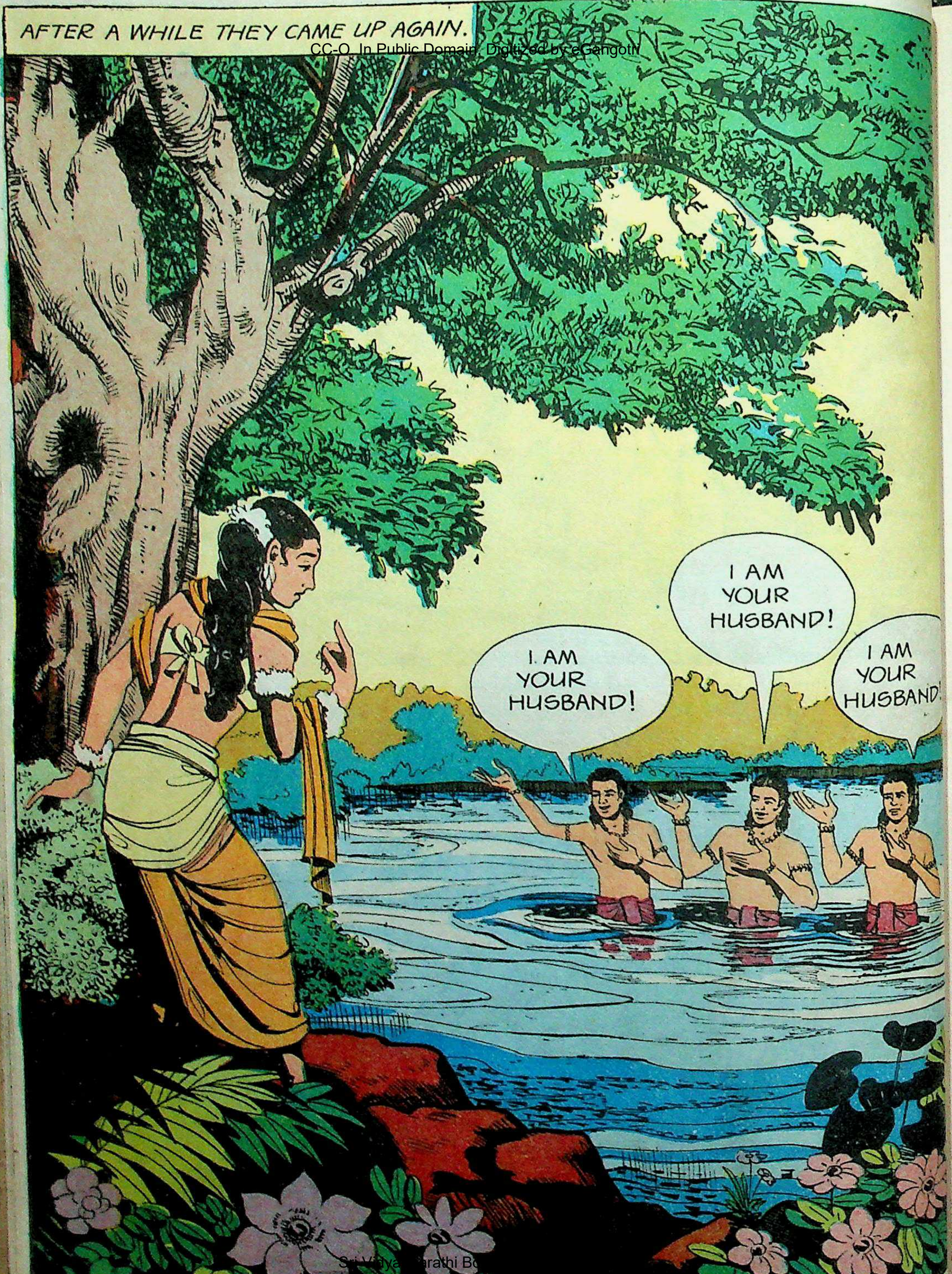

ADVISE ME, MY LORD. SHALL I SUBMIT MYSELF TO THIS TEST OF THE GODS?
SUKANYA! YOU HAVE ALL MY BLESSINGS. LEAD ME TO THE PLACE.


THERE SHE COMES, LEADING THE OLD ONE.
HOW COULD SHE HAVE AGREED TO BECOME HIS WIFE?

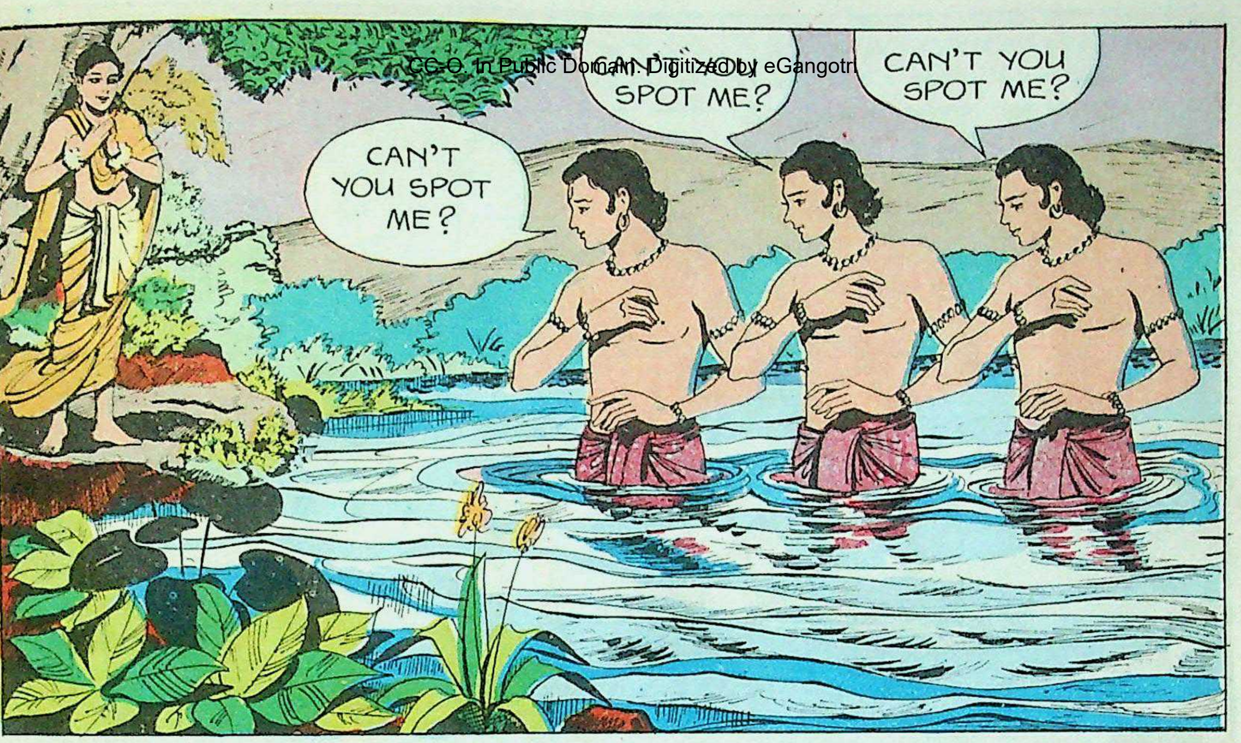

O GODS! NOW PLEASE RESTORE MY LORD'S SIGHT AND YOUTH.
BRAVE SUKANYA, LEAD YOUR HUSBAND INTO THE LAKE.

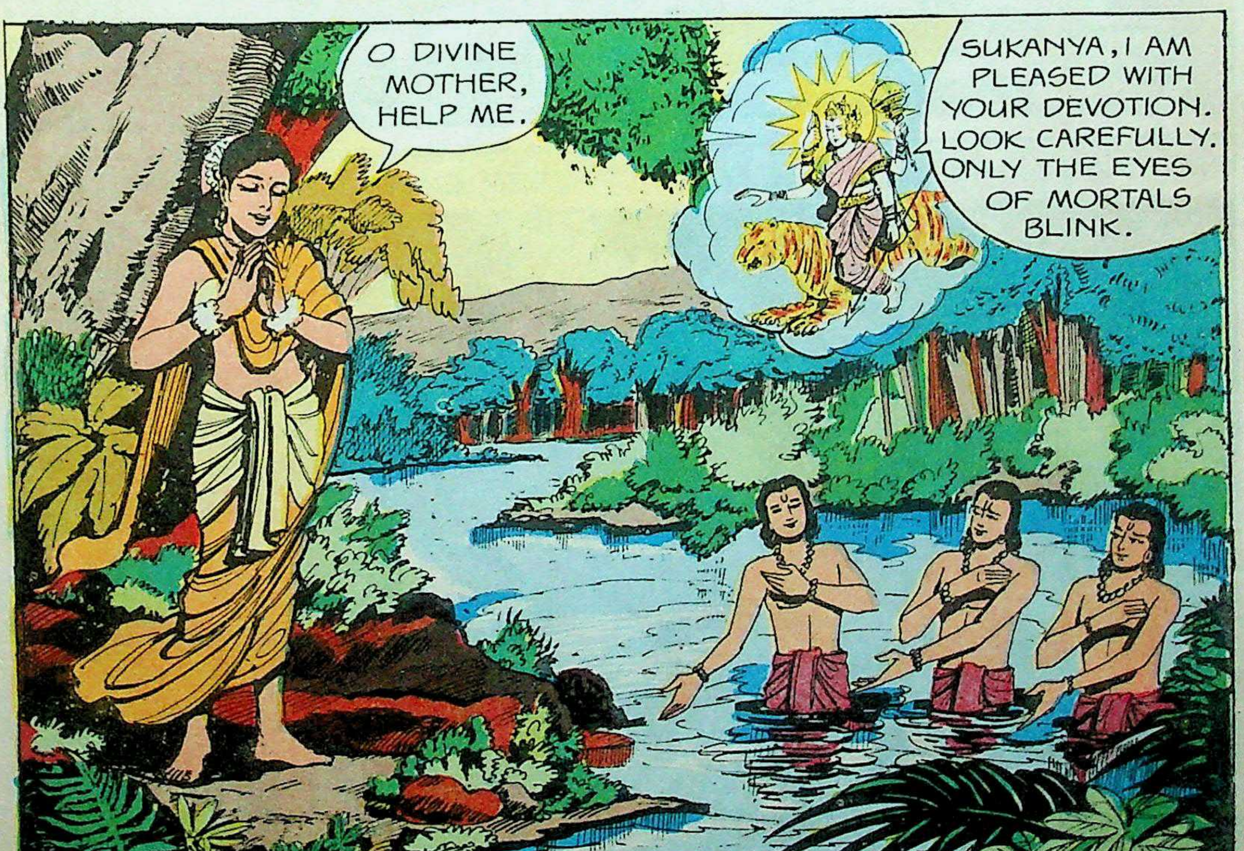

NOW WE SHALL IMMERSE OURSELVES. YOU RETURN TO THE BANK AND WAIT TILL WE COME UP AGAIN.


AS SOON AS SUKANYA REACHED THE BANK, ALL THE THREE DISAPPEARED UNDER THE WATER.

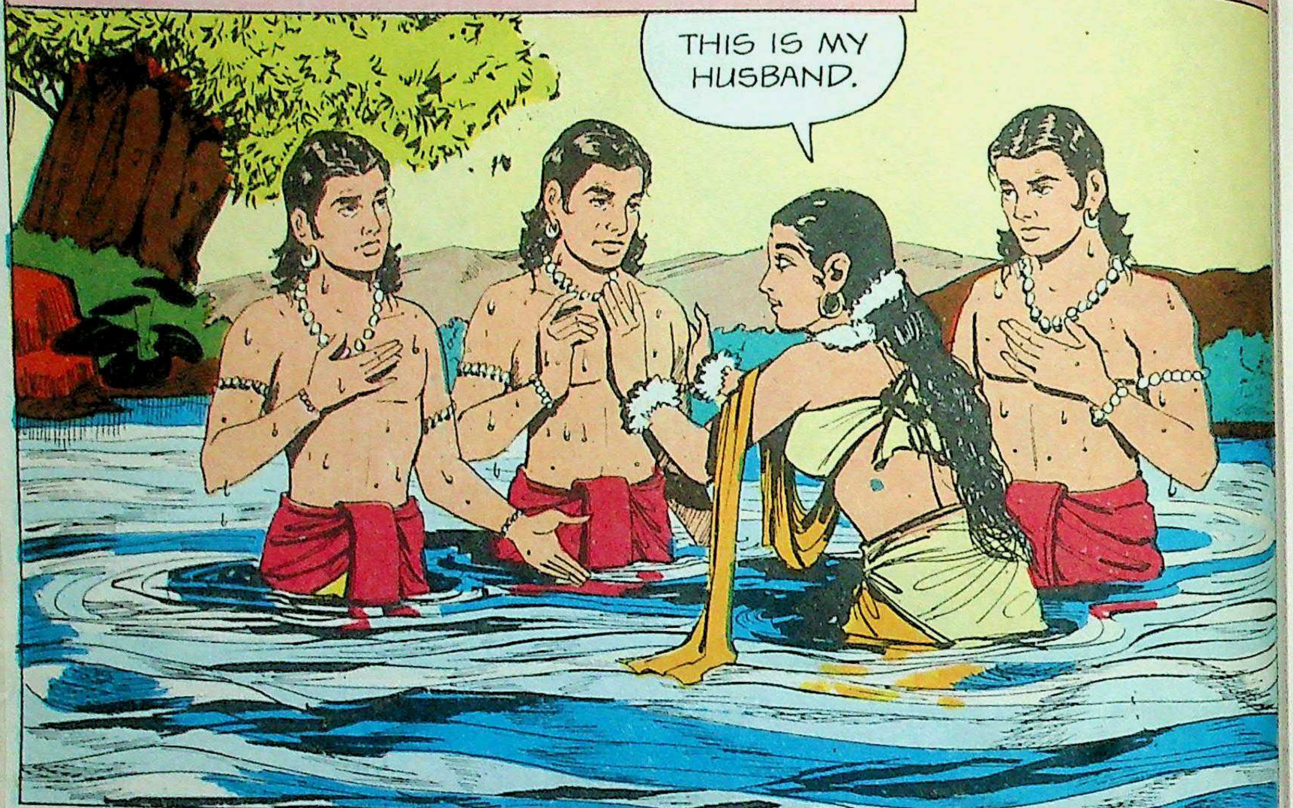

AFTER A WHILE THEY CAME UP AGAIN.
I AM YOUR HUSBAND!
I AM YOUR HUSBAND!
I AM YOUR HUSBAND!

Sri Vidya Barathi Bo

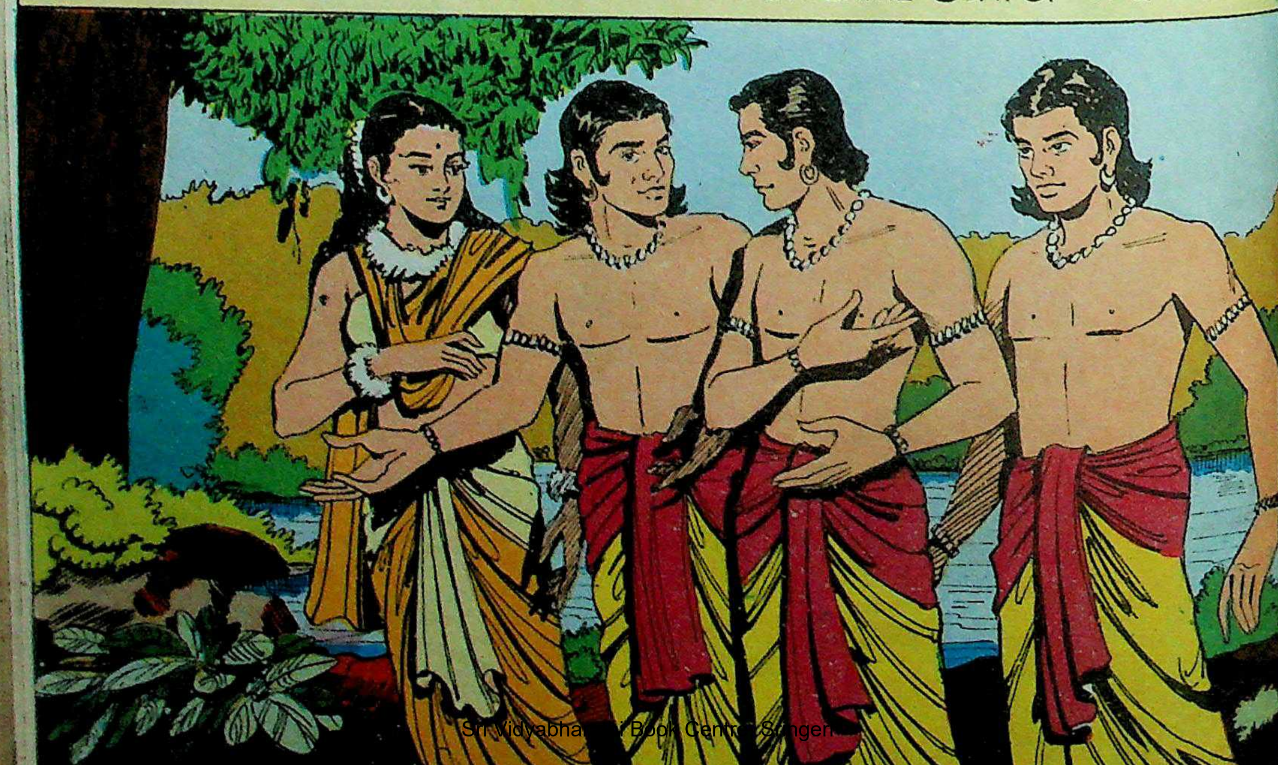

CAN'T YOU SPOT ME?
CAN'T YOU SPOT ME?
CAN'T YOU SPOT ME?


O DIVINE MOTHER, HELP ME.
SUKANYA, I AM PLEASED WITH YOUR DEVOTION. LOOK CAREFULLY. ONLY THE EYES OF MORTALS BLINK.

SUKANYA LOOKED CAREFULLY AT THEM FOR A WHILE AND SAW THAT THE EYES OF THE ONE IN THE CENTRE BLINKED.


THIS IS MY HUSBAND.

HER GUESS WAS RIGHT. ALL FOUR OF THEM CAME OUT OF THE LAKE.



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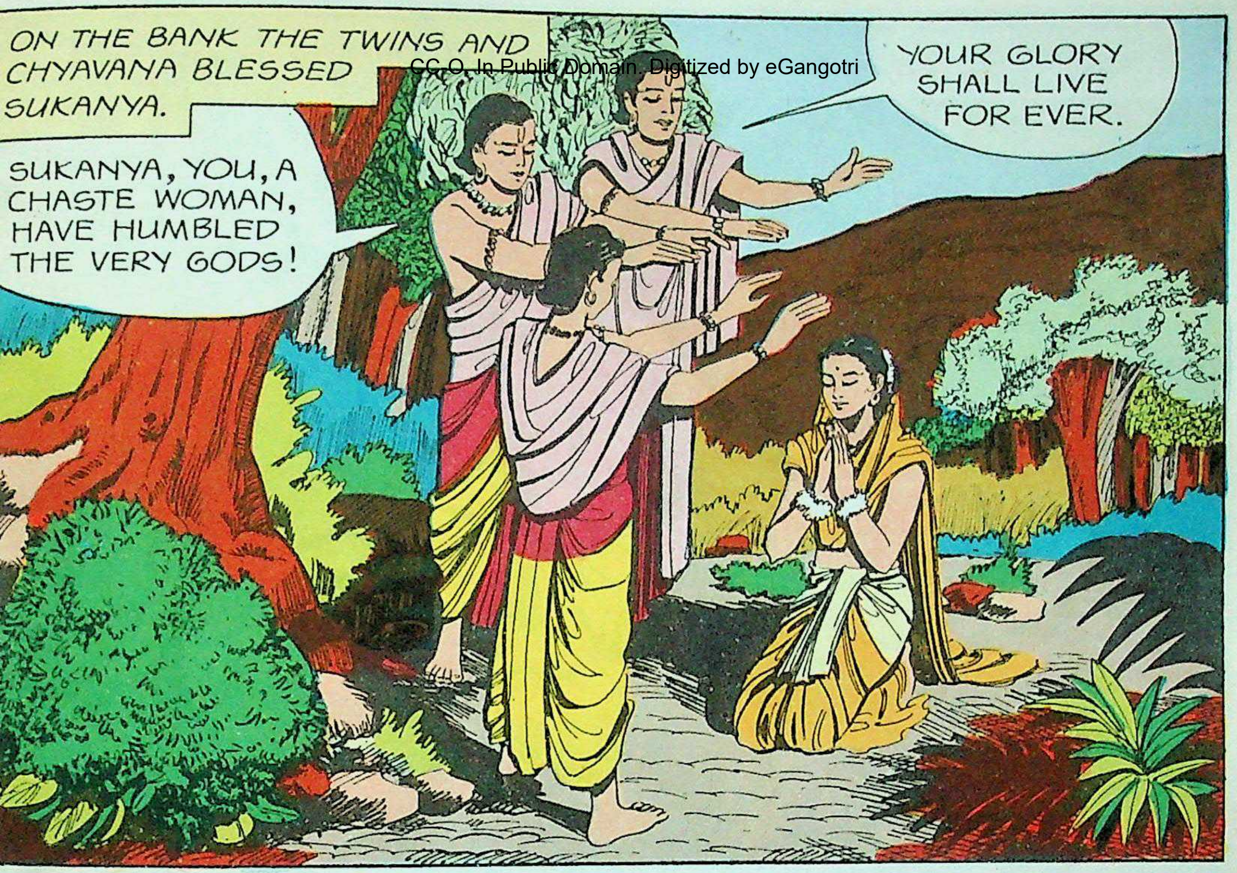
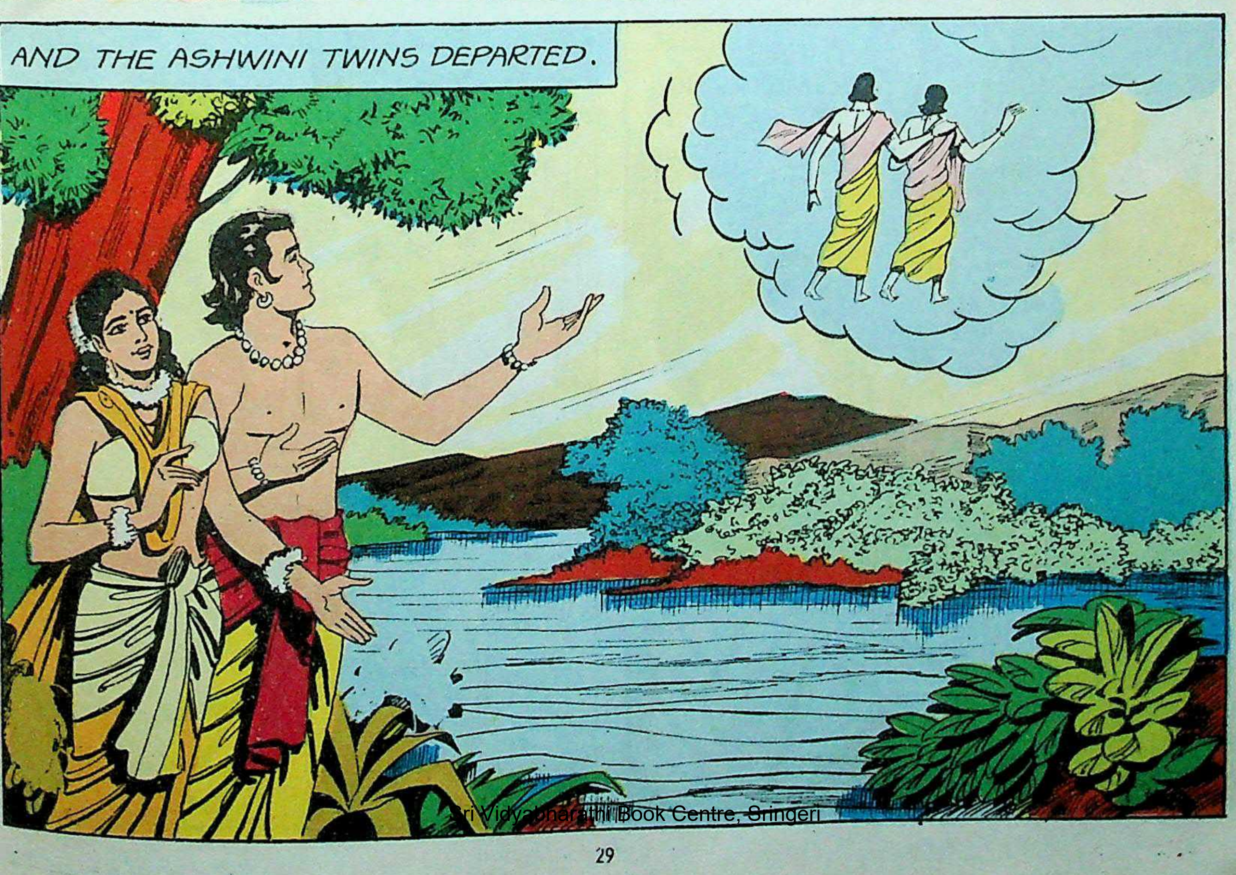
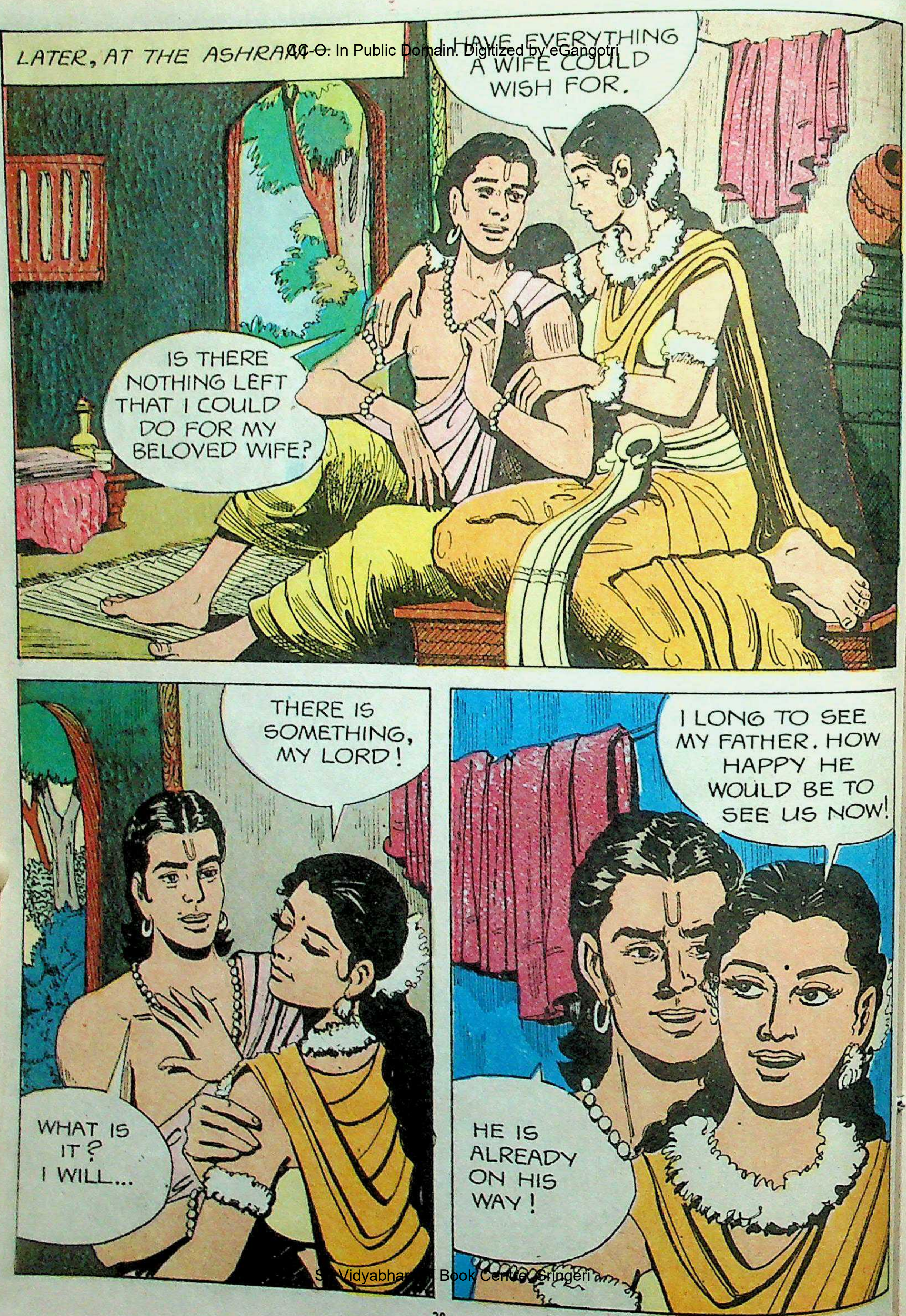

ON THE BANK THE TWINS AND CHYAVANA BLESSED SUKANYA.
SUKANYA, YOU, A CHASTE WOMAN, HAVE HUMBLED THE VERY GODS!
YOUR GLORY SHALL LIVE FOR EVER.


AND THE ASHWINI TWINS DEPARTED.


LATER, AT THE ASHRAM
IS THERE NOTHING LEFT THAT I COULD DO FOR MY BELOVED WIFE?
I HAVE EVERYTHING A WIFE COULD WISH FOR.
THERE IS SOMETHING, MY LORD!
WHAT IS IT? I WILL...
I LONG TO SEE MY FATHER. HOW HAPPY HE WOULD BE TO SEE US NOW!
HE IS ALREADY ON HIS WAY!

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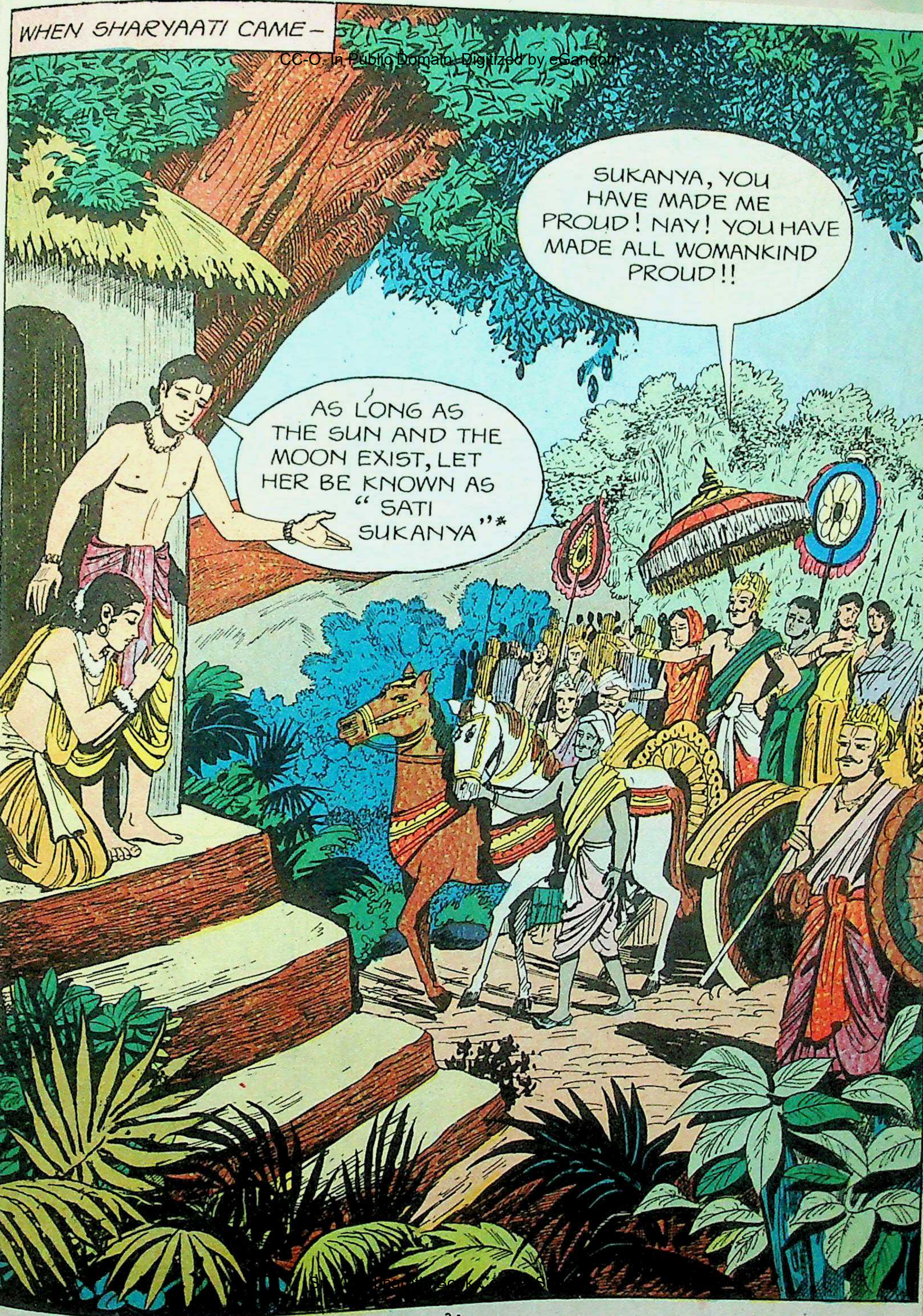
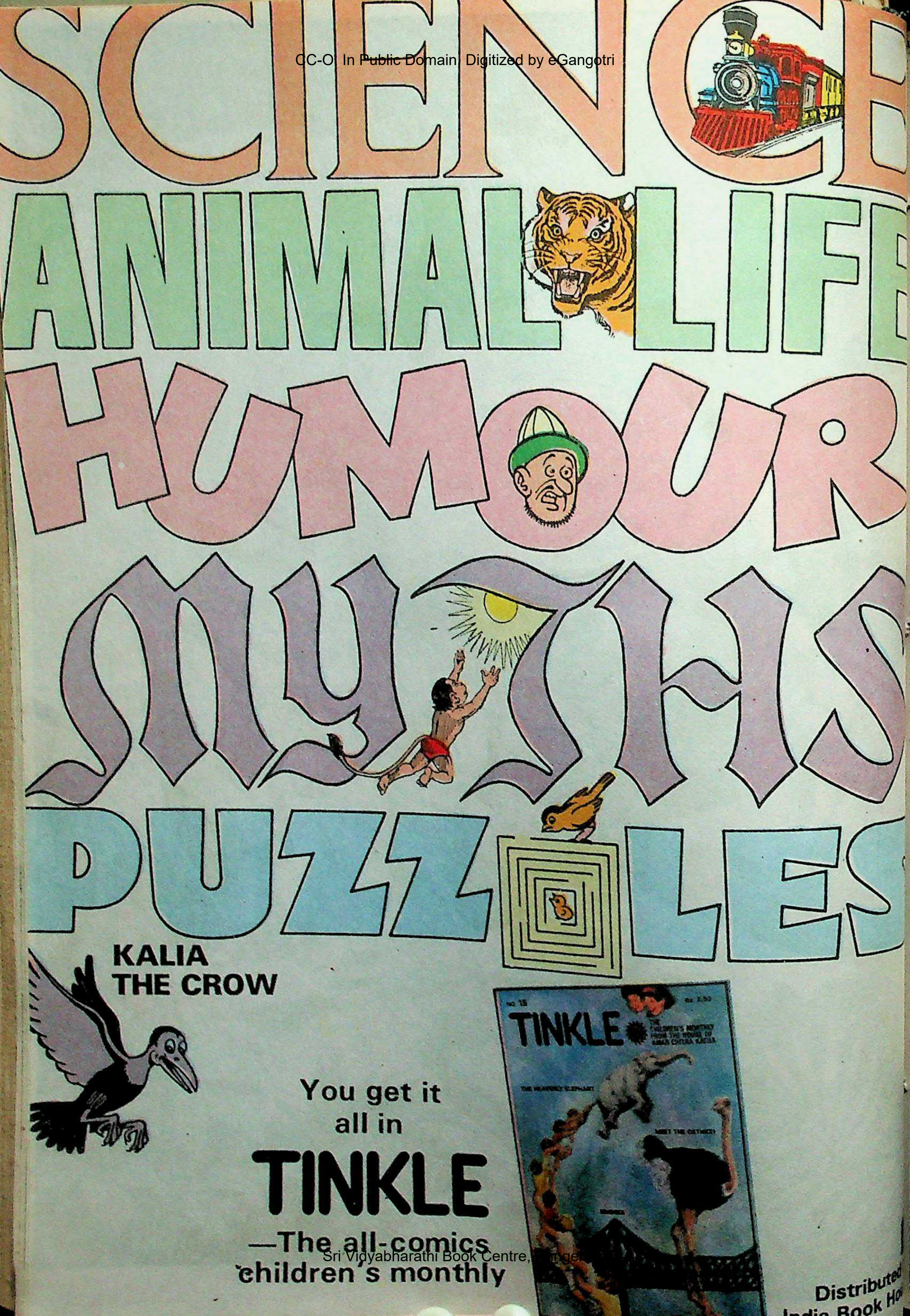

WHEN SHARYAATI CAME –
SUKANYA, YOU HAVE MADE ME PROUD! NAY! YOU HAVE MADE ALL WOMANKIND PROUD!!
AS LONG AS THE SUN AND THE MOON EXIST, LET HER BE KNOWN AS "SATI SUKANYA"*

*CHASTE W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In the words of Karnidhan, a bard of Rajasthan :

"Mai eha put jin
Jeha Durgadas
Bandh Marudhara rakhiyo
Vin thamba Akash"

(O Mother! Produce such sons as Durgadas, who held together the land of the Marus; a feat as difficult as holding the sky without a pillar).

The allusion of holding the sky without the support of pillars refers to the fact that Durgadas staked his all to preserve the throne of Jodhpur after the death of King Jaswant Singh. The young prince Ajeet Singh was kept safely hidden and the land was ably governed in his name by Durgadas.

Durgadas was also known for his religious tolerance. It is said that when he returned the grandson of Aurangzeb, after holding him in custody for a number of years, the boy was found to be proficient in the Koran and Muslim theology.

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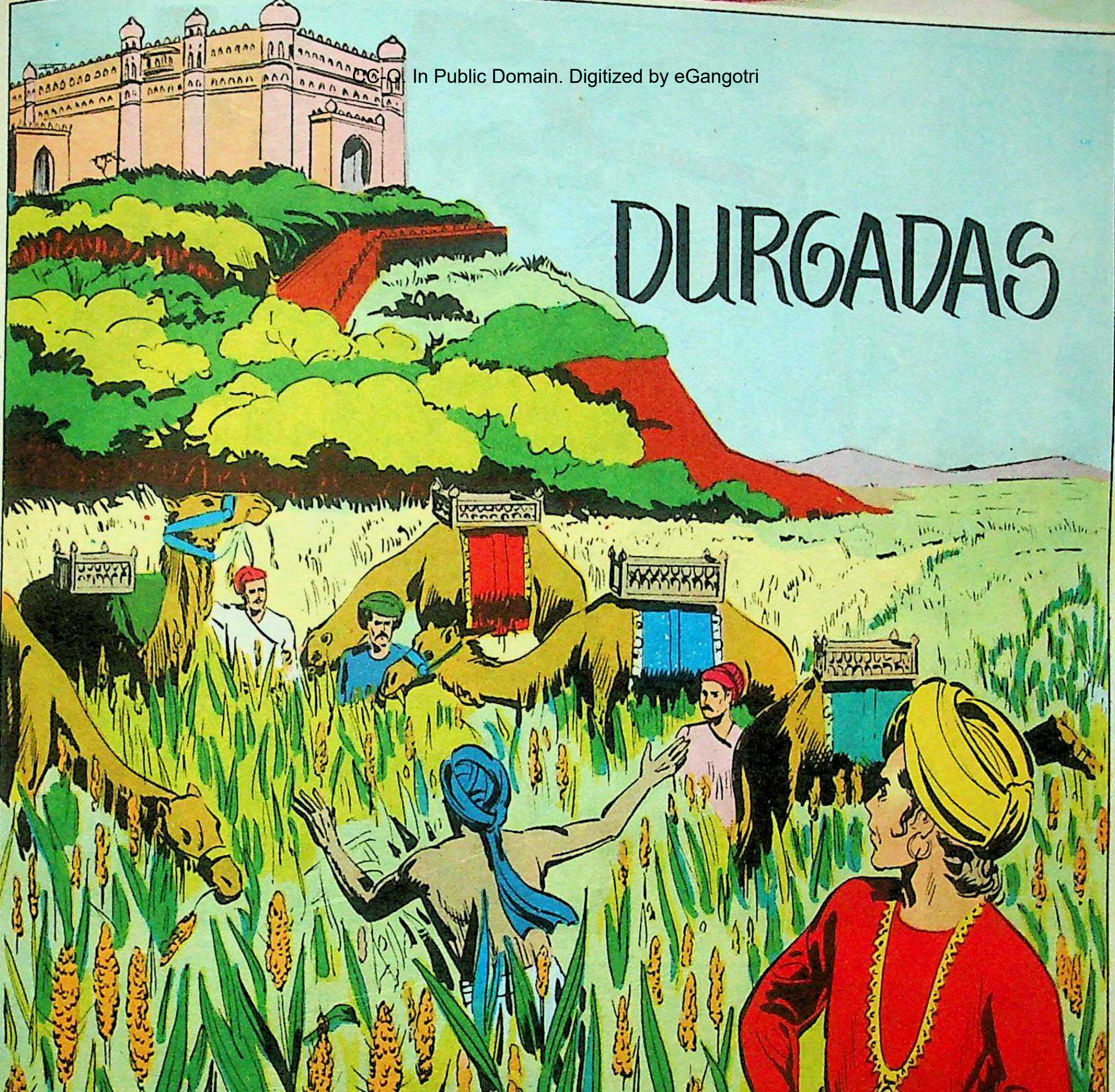
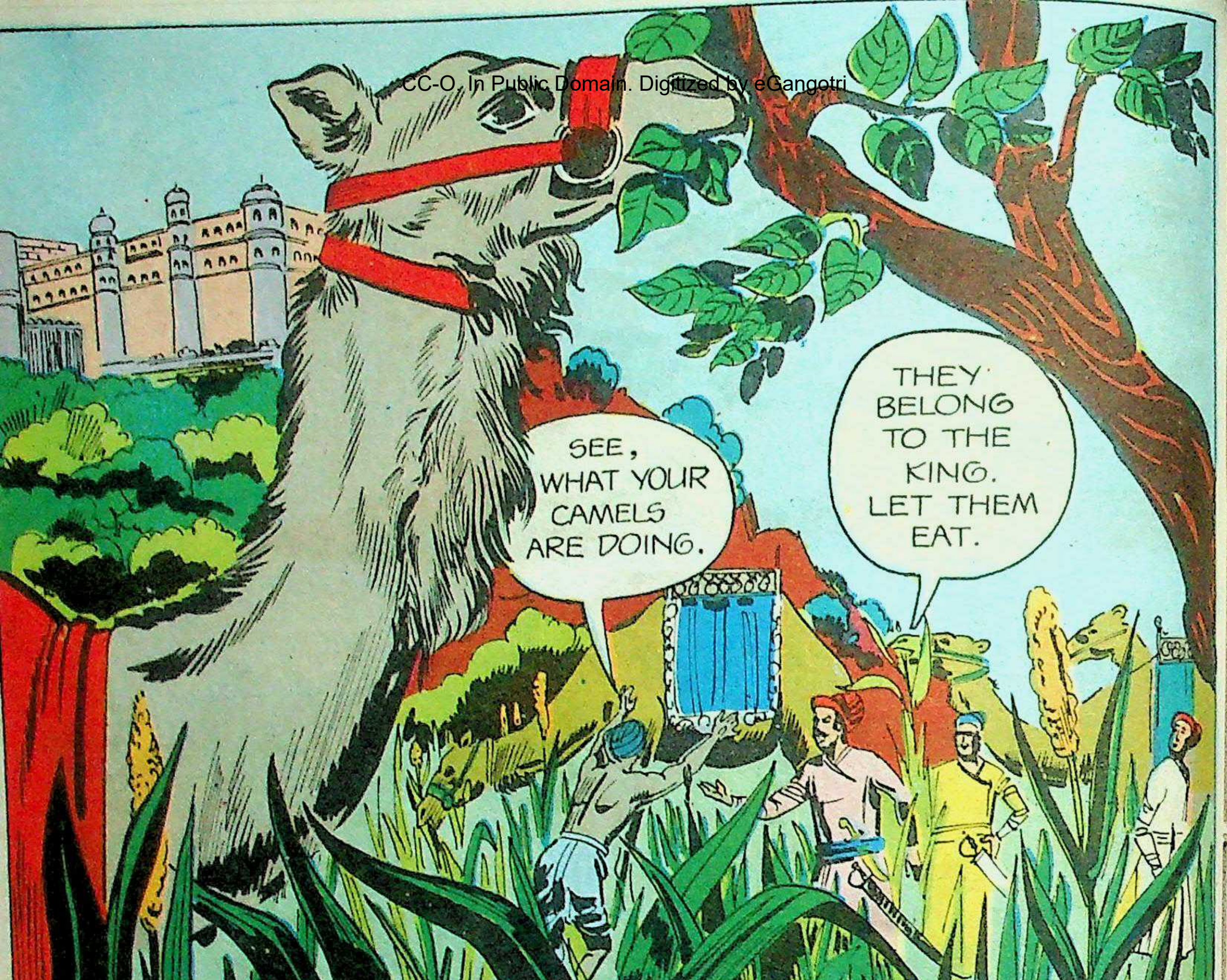
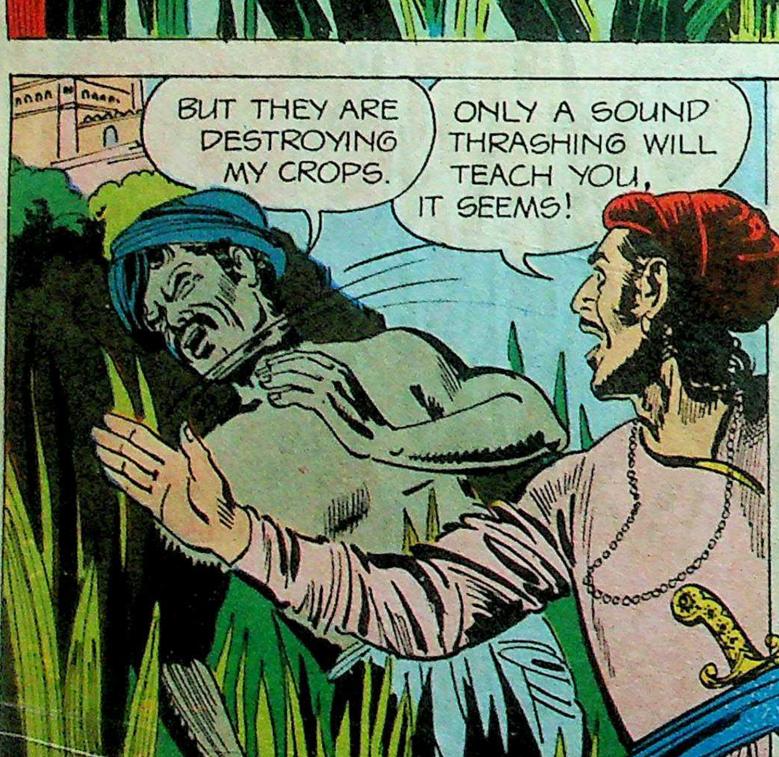
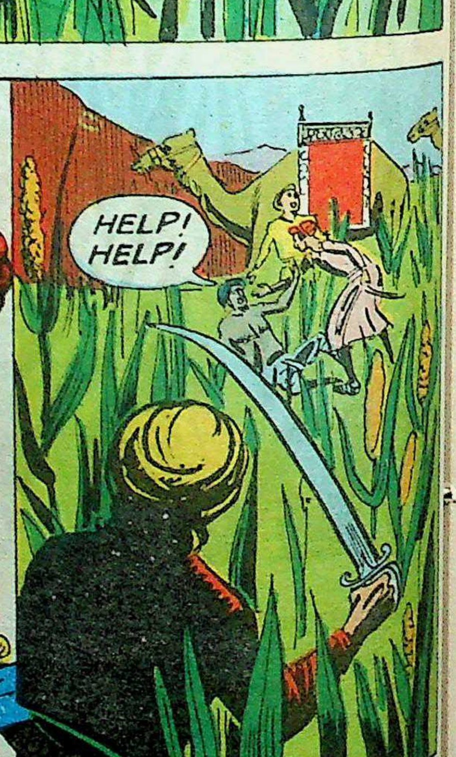
DURGADAS

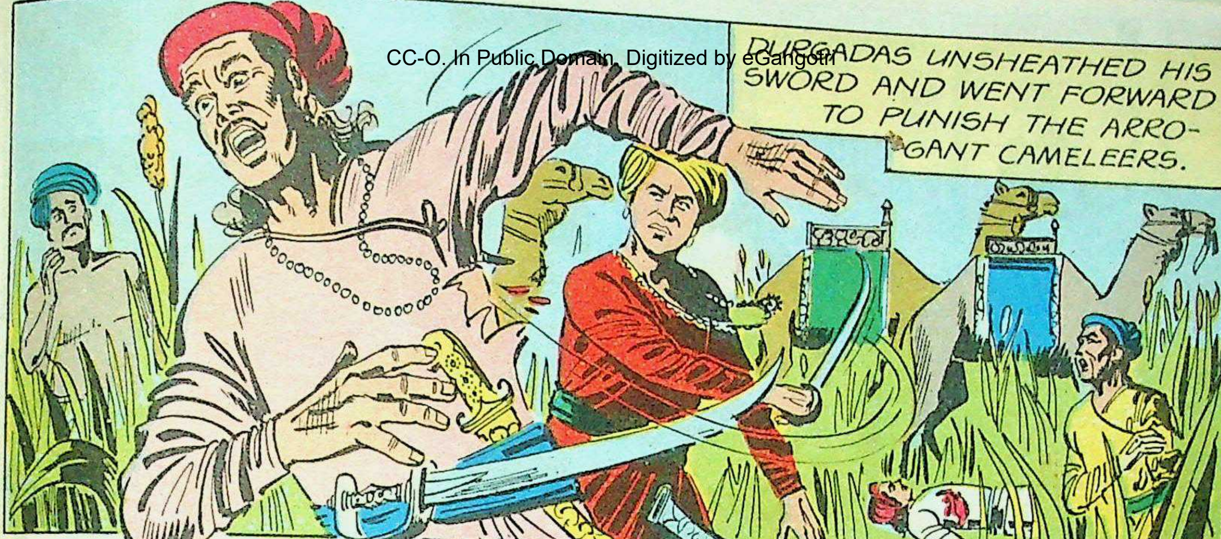


DURGADAS WAS THE SON OF THE THIRD WIFE OF THAKUR AASKARAN, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE KING OF JODHPUR. ONE DAY WHEN HE WAS BARELY 18 YEARS OLD, HE WAS STANDING OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE OF SALVE, WHERE HE LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER.


SEE, WHAT YOUR CAMELS ARE DOING.
THEY BELONG TO THE KING. LET THEM EAT.

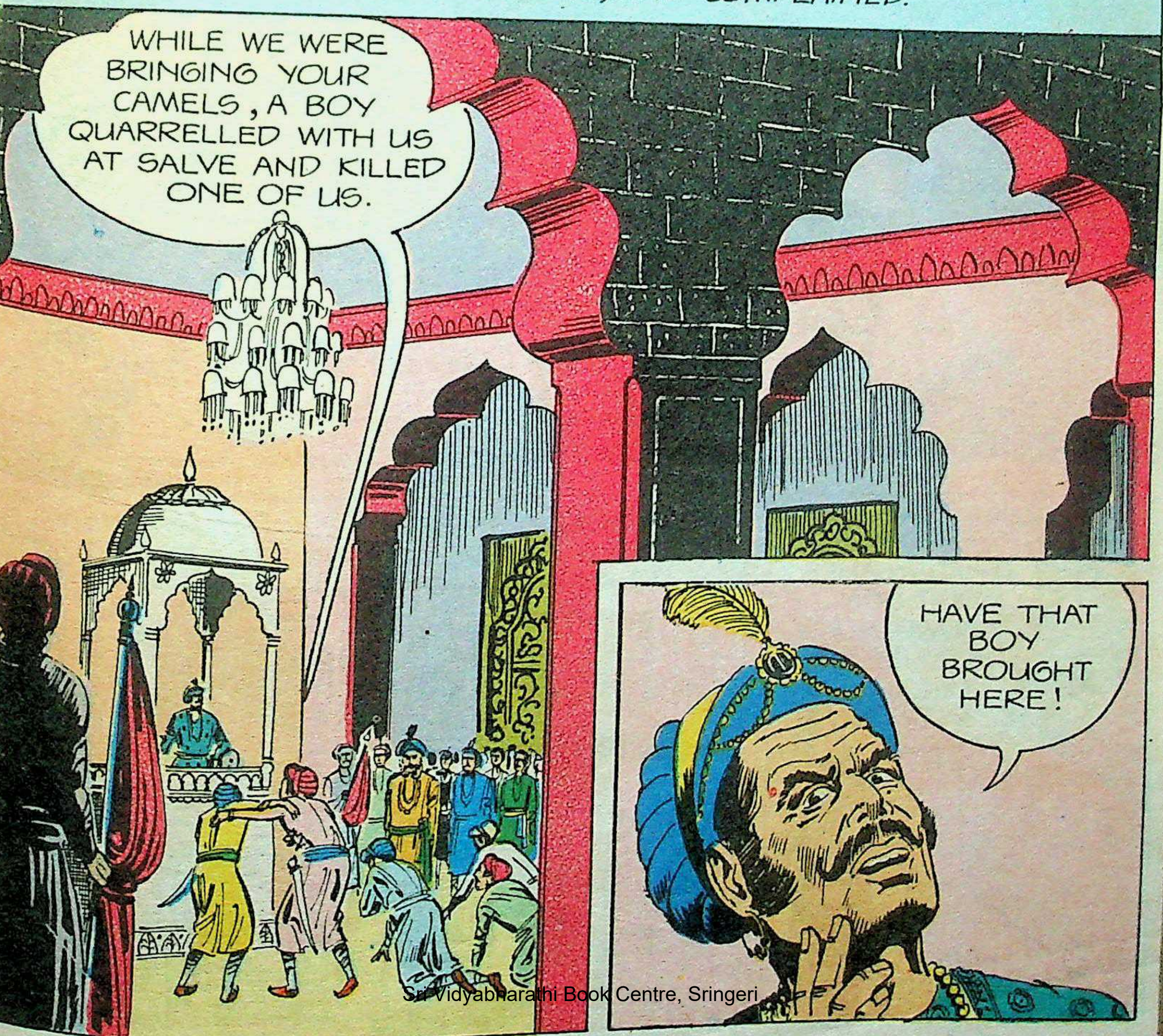

BUT THEY ARE DESTROYING MY CROPS.
ONLY A SOUND THRASHING WILL TEACH YOU, IT SEEMS!

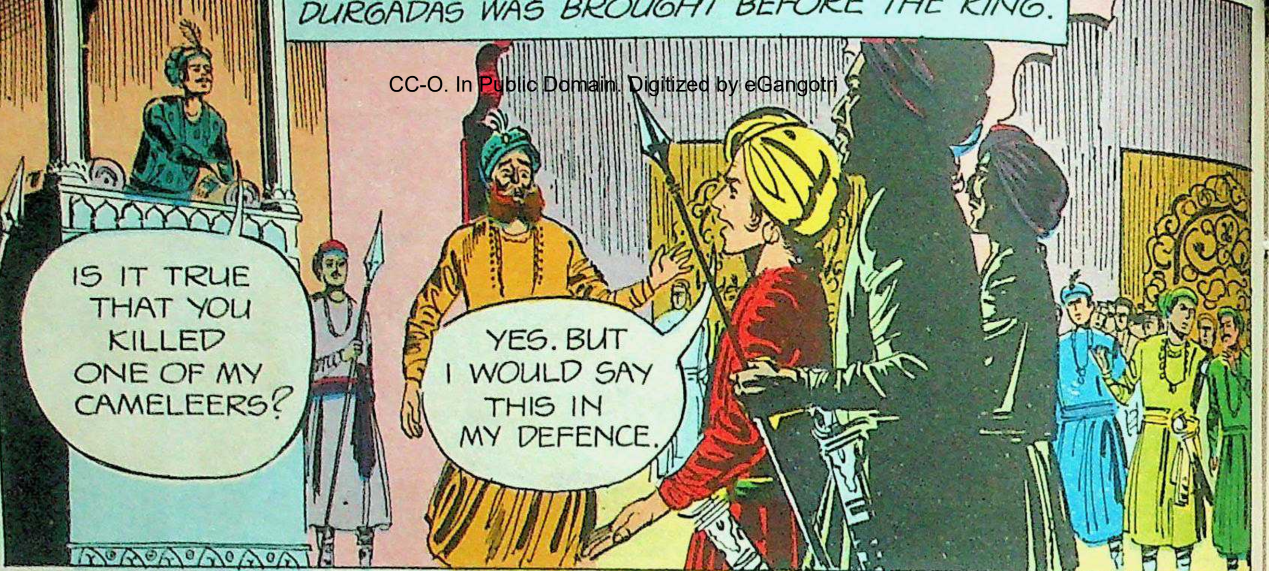

HELP! HELP!

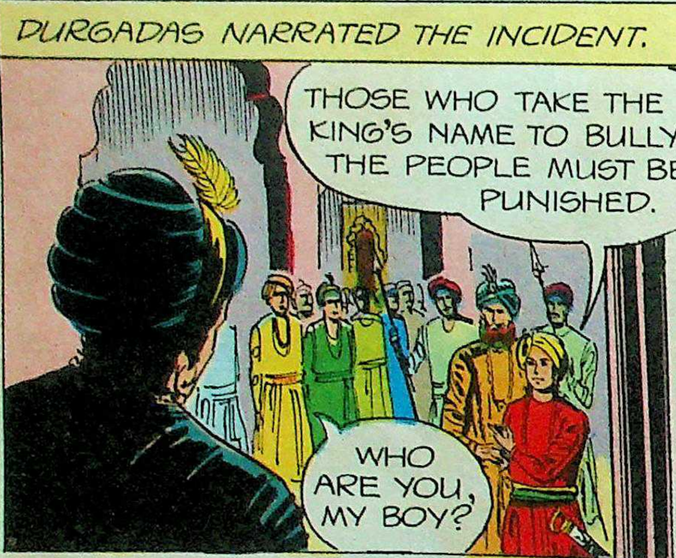


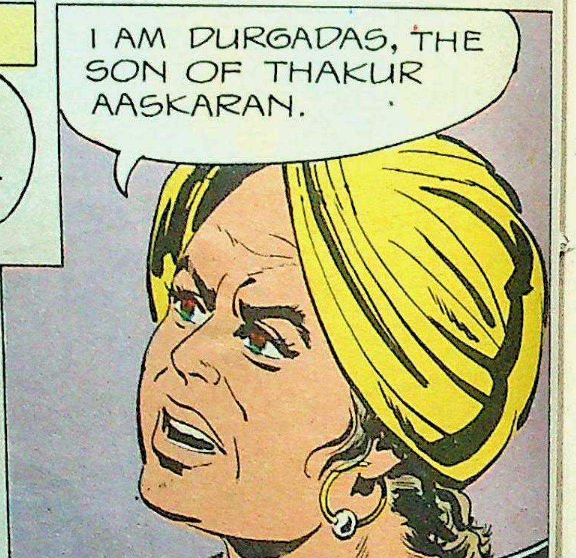
DURGADAS UNSHEATHED HIS SWORD AND WENT FORWARD TO PUNISH THE ARROGANT CAMELEERS.

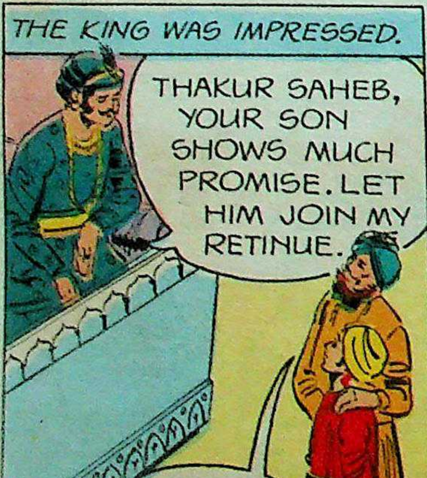
THE FRIGHTENED CAMELEERS CAME RUNNING TO JASWANT SINGH, THE KING OF JODHPUR, AND COMPLAINED.

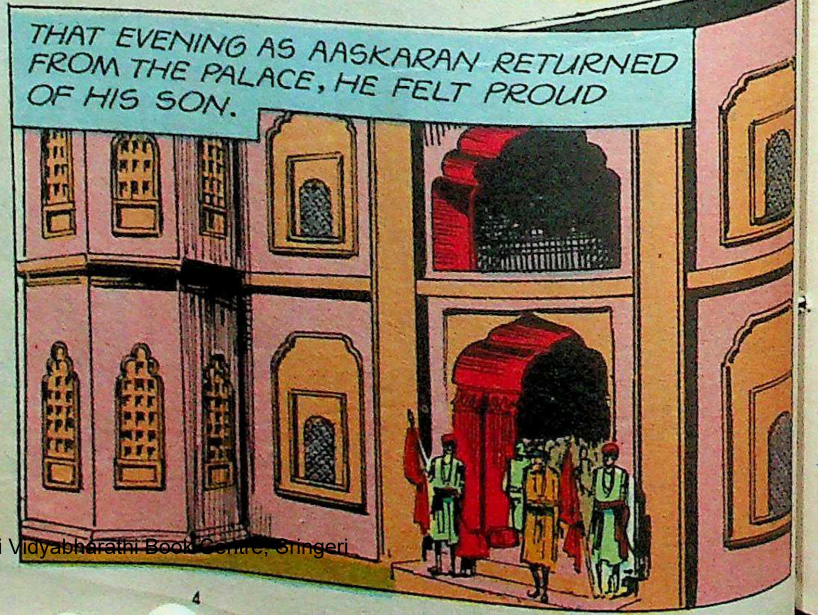

WHILE WE WERE BRINGING YOUR CAMELS, A BOY QUARRELLED WITH US AT SALVE AND KILLED ONE OF US.
HAVE THAT BOY BROUGHT HERE!

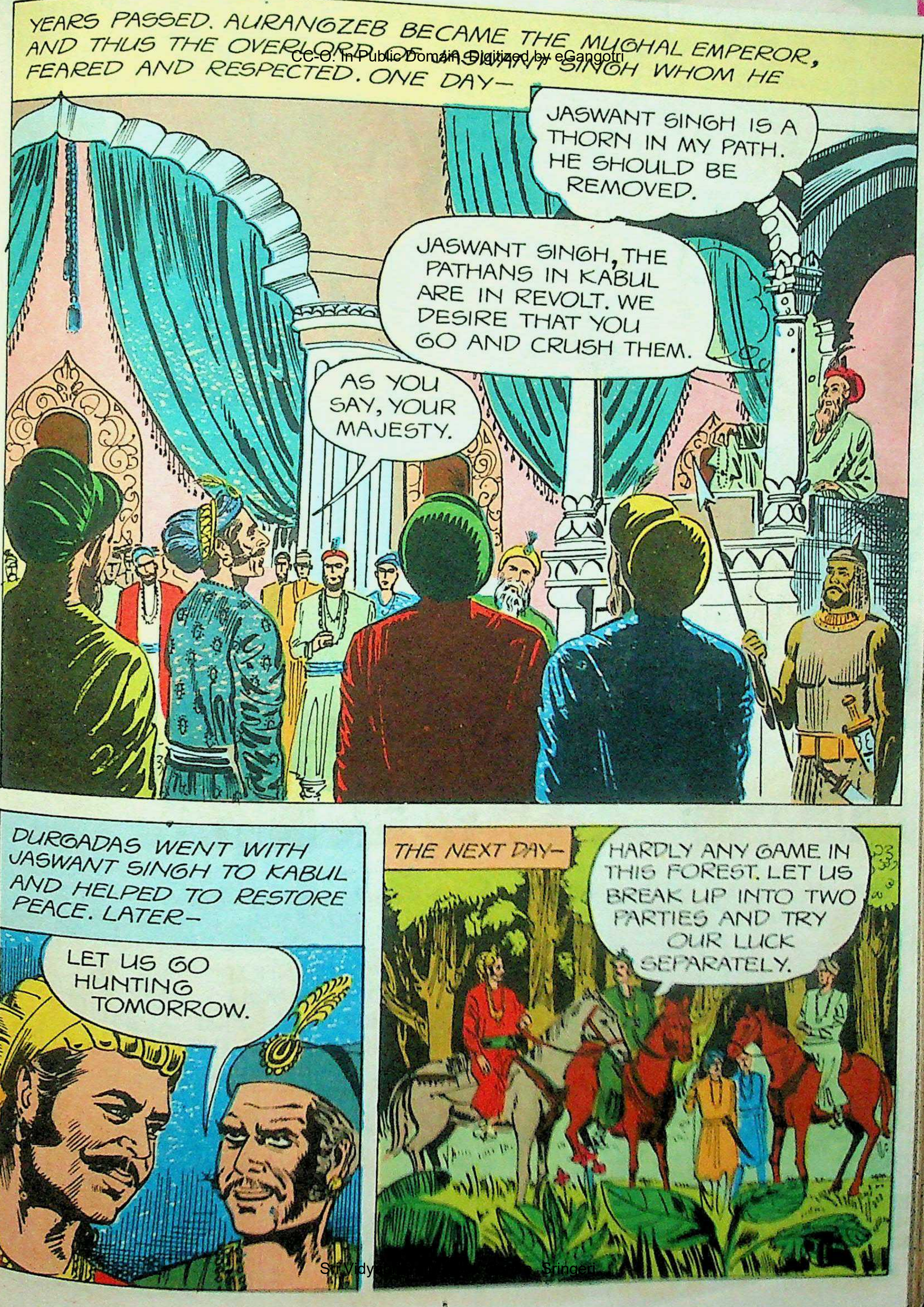

DURGADAS WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING.
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU KILLED ONE OF MY CAMELEERS?
YES. BUT I WOULD SAY THIS IN MY DEFENCE.


DURGADAS NARRATED THE INCIDENT.
THOSE WHO TAKE THE KING'S NAME TO BULLY THE PEOPLE MUST BE PUNISHED.
WHO ARE YOU, MY BOY?

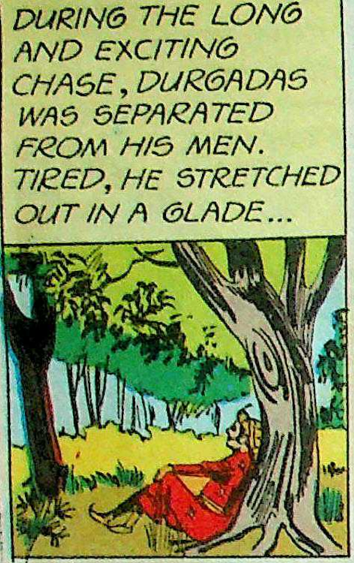

I AM DURGADAS, THE SON OF THAKUR AASKARAN.

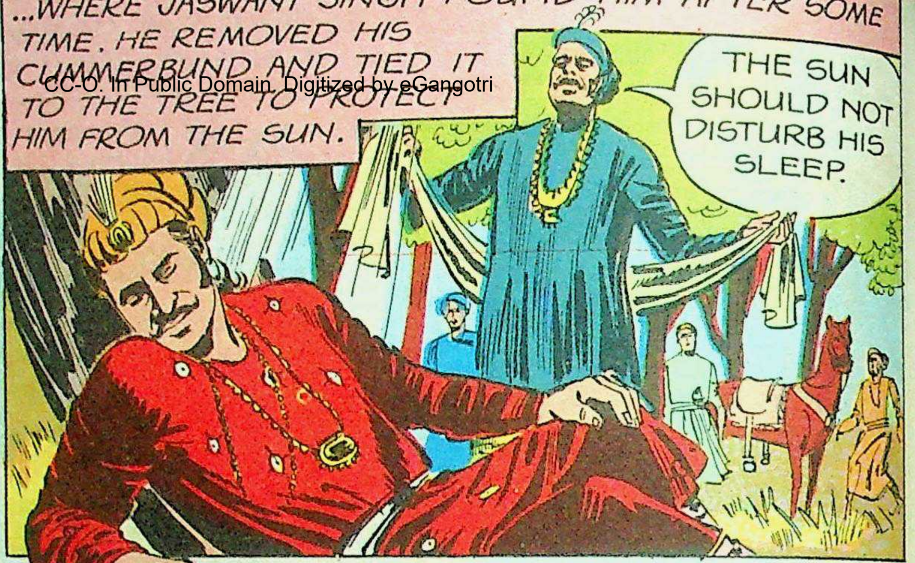

THE KING WAS IMPRESSED.
THAKUR SAHEB, YOUR SON SHOWS MUCH PROMISE. LET HIM JOIN MY RETINUE.
I AM HONOURED.

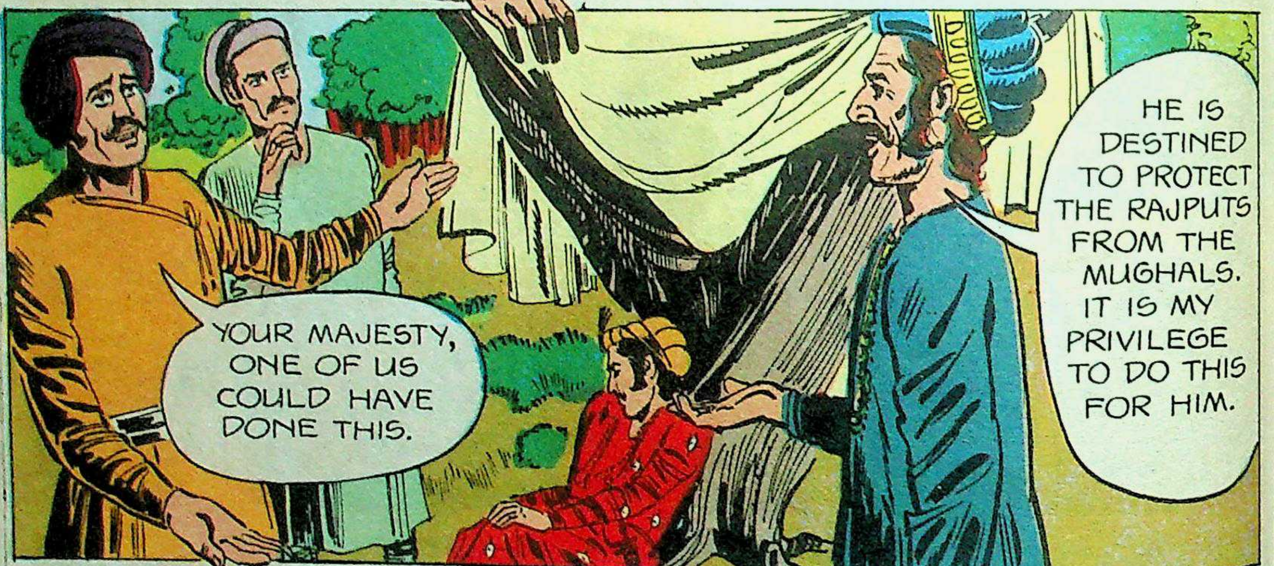

THAT EVENING AS AASKARAN RETURNED FROM THE PALACE, HE FELT PROUD OF HIS SON.

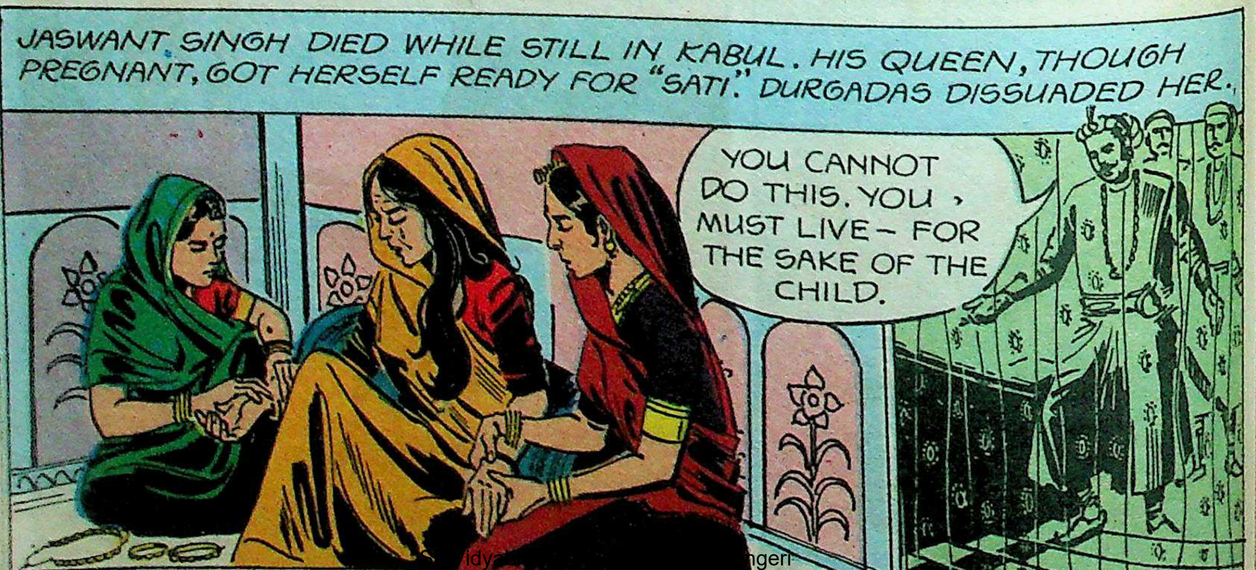

YEARS PASSED. AURANGZEB BECAME THE MUGHAL EMPEROR, AND THUS THE OVERLORD OF JASWANT SINGH WHOM HE FEARED AND RESPECTED. ONE DAY—
JASWANT SINGH IS A THORN IN MY PATH. HE SHOULD BE REMOVED.
JASWANT SINGH, THE PATHANS IN KABUL ARE IN REVOLT. WE DESIRE THAT YOU GO AND CRUSH THEM.
AS YOU SAY, YOUR MAJESTY.
DURGADAS WENT WITH JASWANT SINGH TO KABUL AND HELPED TO RESTORE PEACE. LATER—
LET US GO HUNTING TOMORROW.
THE NEXT DAY—
HARDLY ANY GAME IN THIS FOREST. LET US BREAK UP INTO TWO PARTIES AND TRY OUR LUCK SEPARATELY.

Sri Vidya ... Sringeri


DURING THE LONG AND EXCITING CHASE, DURGADAS WAS SEPARATED FROM HIS MEN. TIRED, HE STRETCHED OUT IN A GLADE...

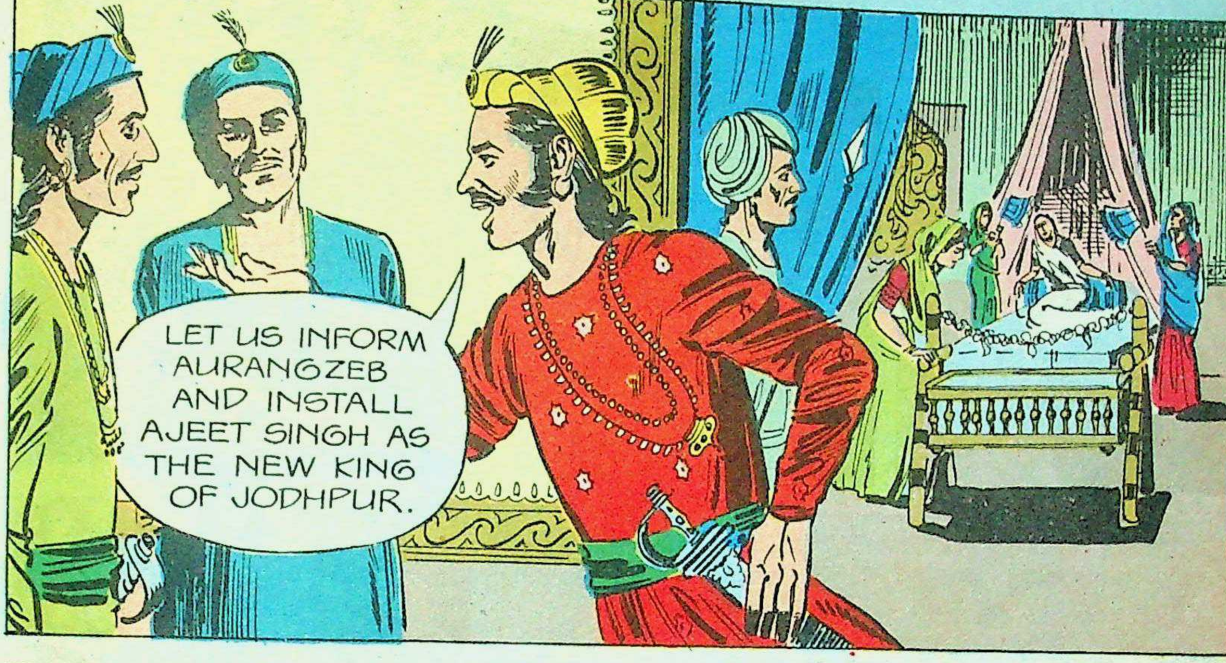

...WHERE JASWANT SINGH FOUND HIM AFTER SOME TIME. HE REMOVED HIS CUMMERBUND AND TIED IT TO THE TREE TO PROTECT HIM FROM THE SUN.
THE SUN SHOULD NOT DISTURB HIS SLEEP.


YOUR MAJESTY, ONE OF US COULD HAVE DONE THIS.
HE IS DESTINED TO PROTECT THE RAJPUTS FROM THE MUGHALS. IT IS MY PRIVILEGE TO DO THIS FOR HIM.

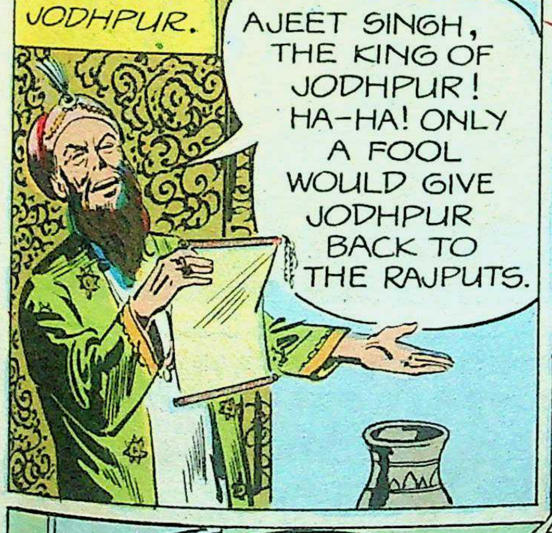

JASWANT SINGH DIED WHILE STILL IN KABUL. HIS QUEEN, THOUGH PREGNANT, GOT HERSELF READY FOR "SATI". DURGADAS DISSUADED HER.
YOU CANNOT DO THIS. YOU, MUST LIVE – FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILD.

Idya ... ngeri

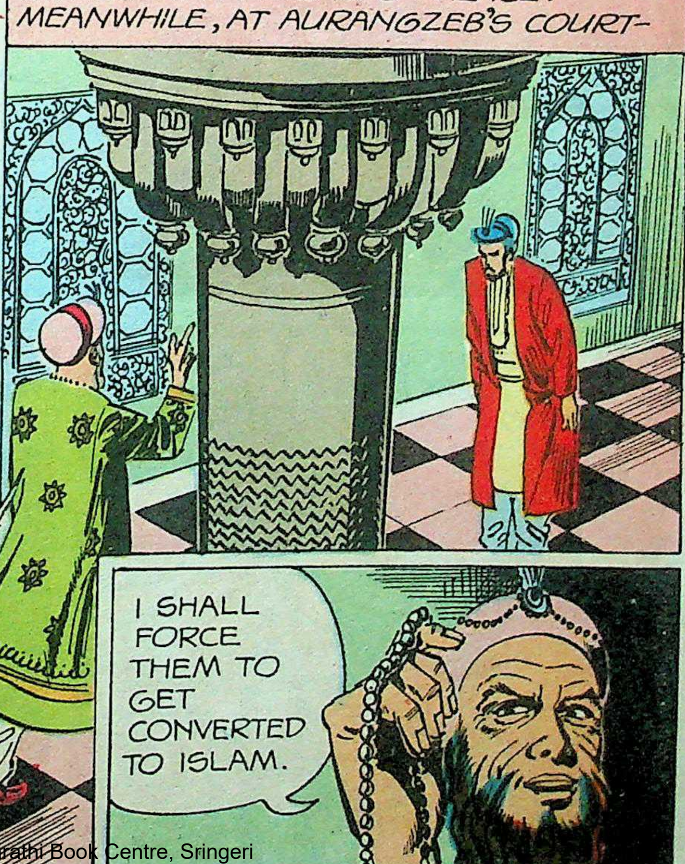
ALL OF THEM LEFT KABUL FOR JODHPUR. ON THE WAY, AT LAHORE, THE QUEEN GAVE BIRTH TO A SON. HE WAS NAMED AJEET SINGH.

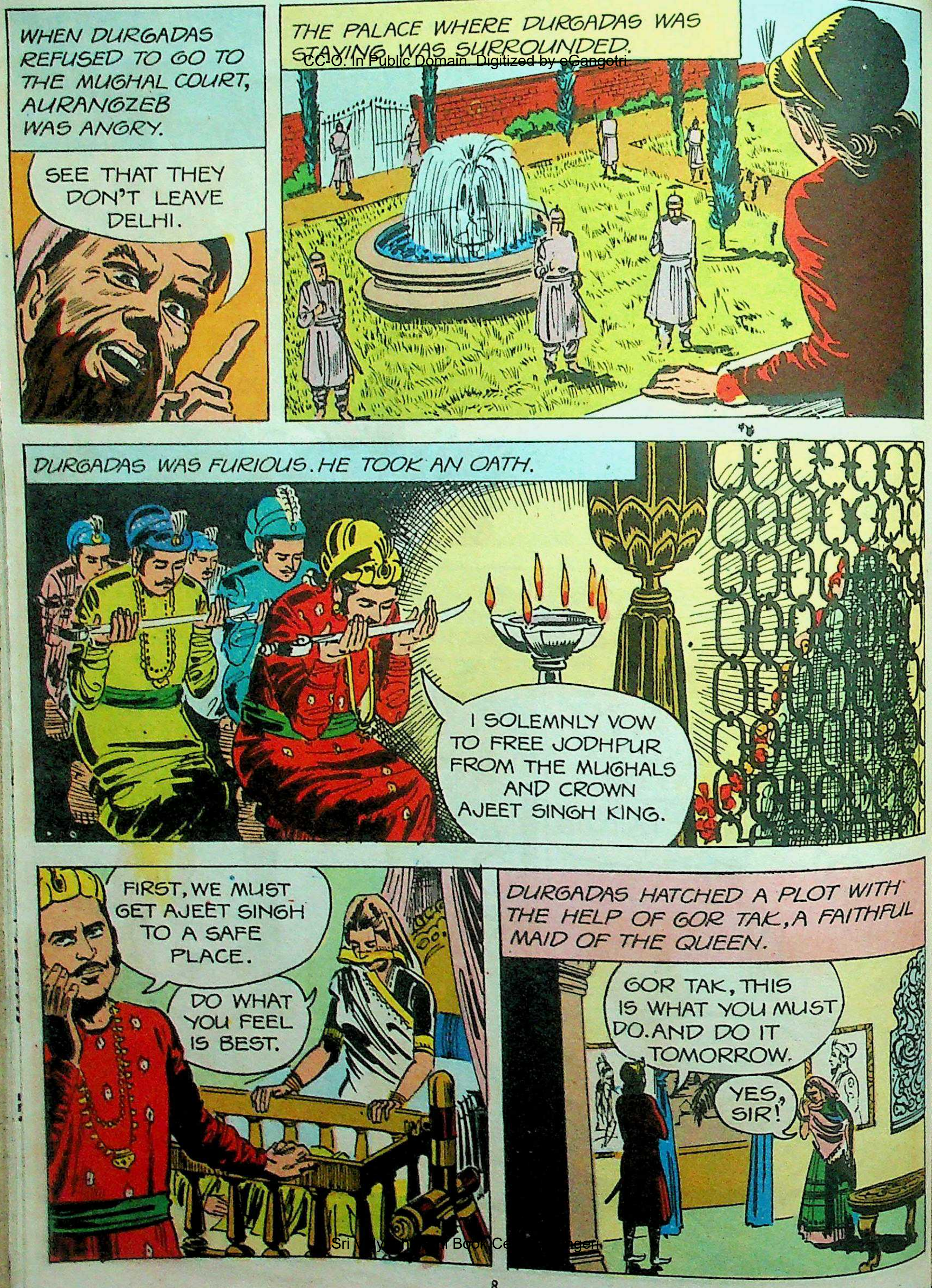

LET US INFORM AURANGZEB AND INSTALL AJEET SINGH AS THE NEW KING OF JODHPUR.

BY THEN AURANGZEB HAD ANNEXED JODHPUR.

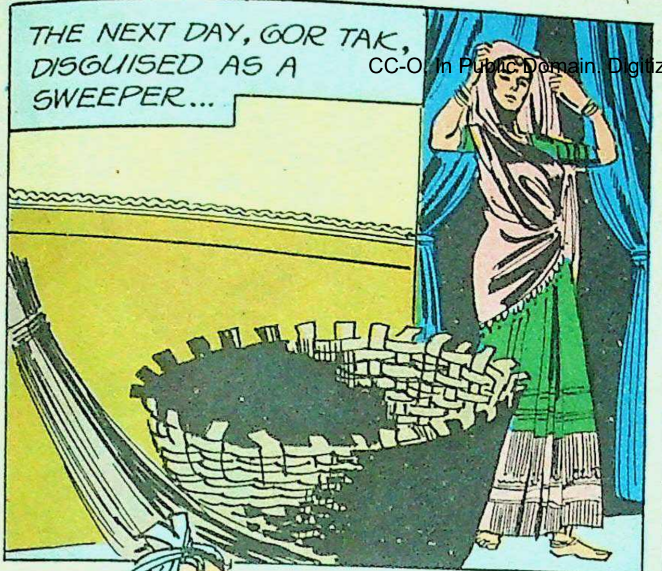

AJEET SINGH, THE KING OF JODHPUR! HA-HA! ONLY A FOOL WOULD GIVE JODHPUR BACK TO THE RAJPUTS.

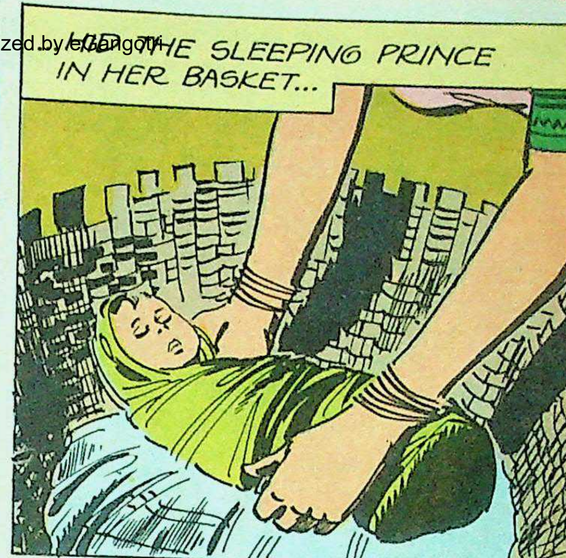
DURGADAS REACHED DELHI AND STAYED AT A FRIEND'S PALACE. MEANWHILE, AT AURANGZEB'S COURT-

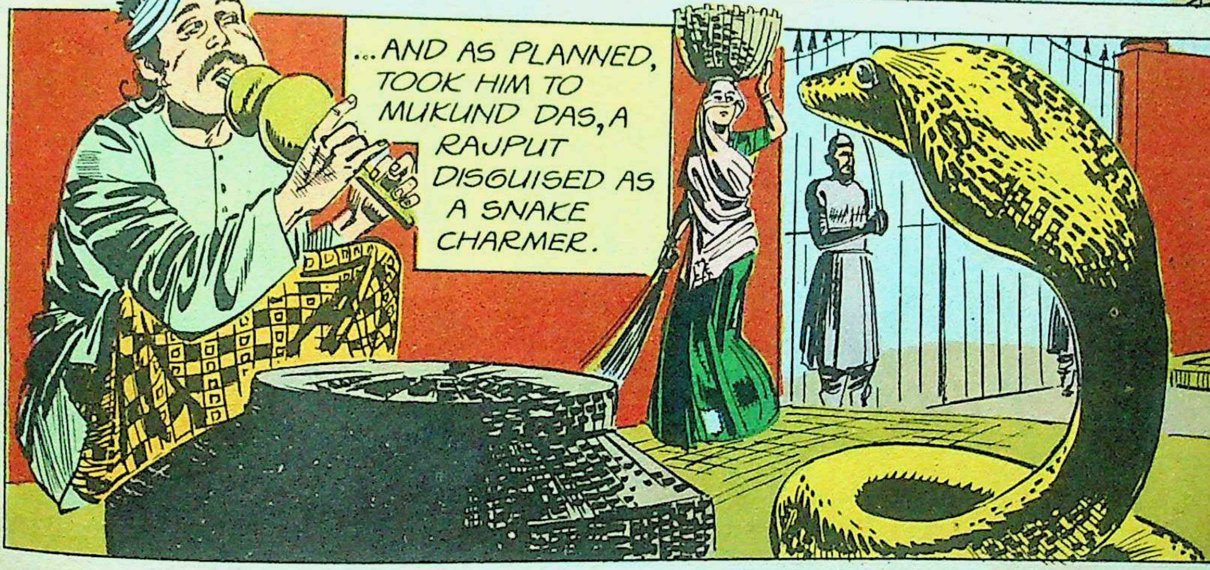

TELL DURGADAS TO PRESENT THE QUEEN MOTHER AND THE PRINCE AT OUR PALACE.
I SHALL FORCE THEM TO GET CONVERTED TO ISLAM.

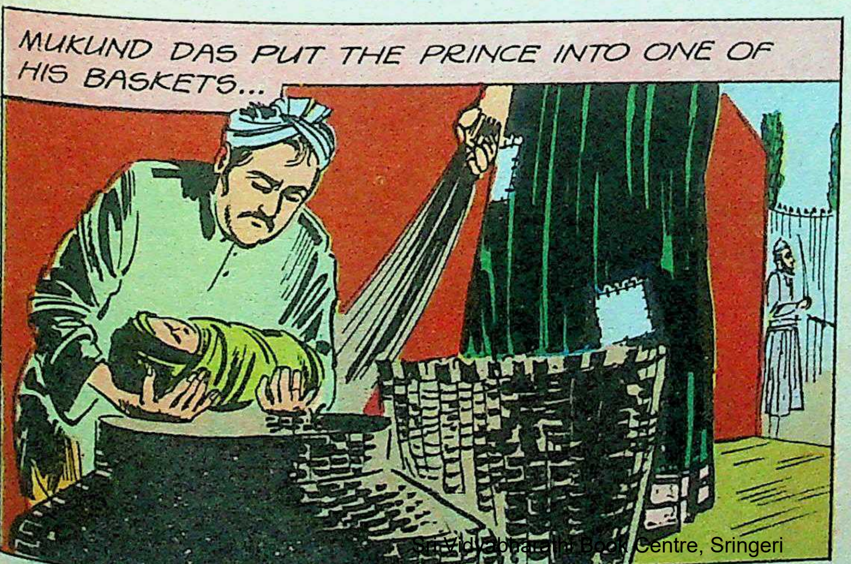

WHEN DURGADAS REFUSED TO GO TO THE MUGHAL COURT, AURANGZEB WAS ANGRY.
SEE THAT THEY DON'T LEAVE DELHI.
THE PALACE WHERE DURGADAS WAS STAYING WAS SURROUNDED.
DURGADAS WAS FURIOUS. HE TOOK AN OATH.
I SOLEMNLY VOW TO FREE JODHPUR FROM THE MUGHALS AND CROWN AJEET SINGH KING.
FIRST, WE MUST GET AJEET SINGH TO A SAFE PLACE.
DO WHAT YOU FEEL IS BEST.
DURGADAS HATCHED A PLOT WITH THE HELP OF GOR TAK, A FAITHFUL MAID OF THE QUEEN.
GOR TAK, THIS IS WHAT YOU MUST DO. AND DO IT TOMORROW.
YES, SIR!

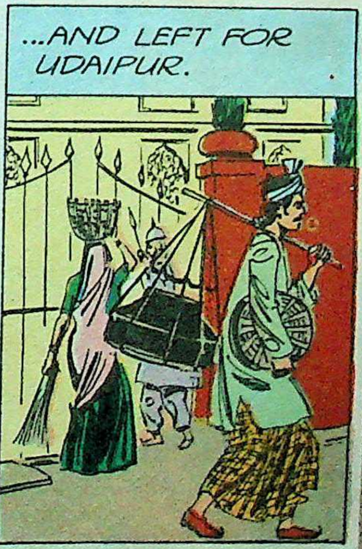
Sri ... Book Ce... ...agar

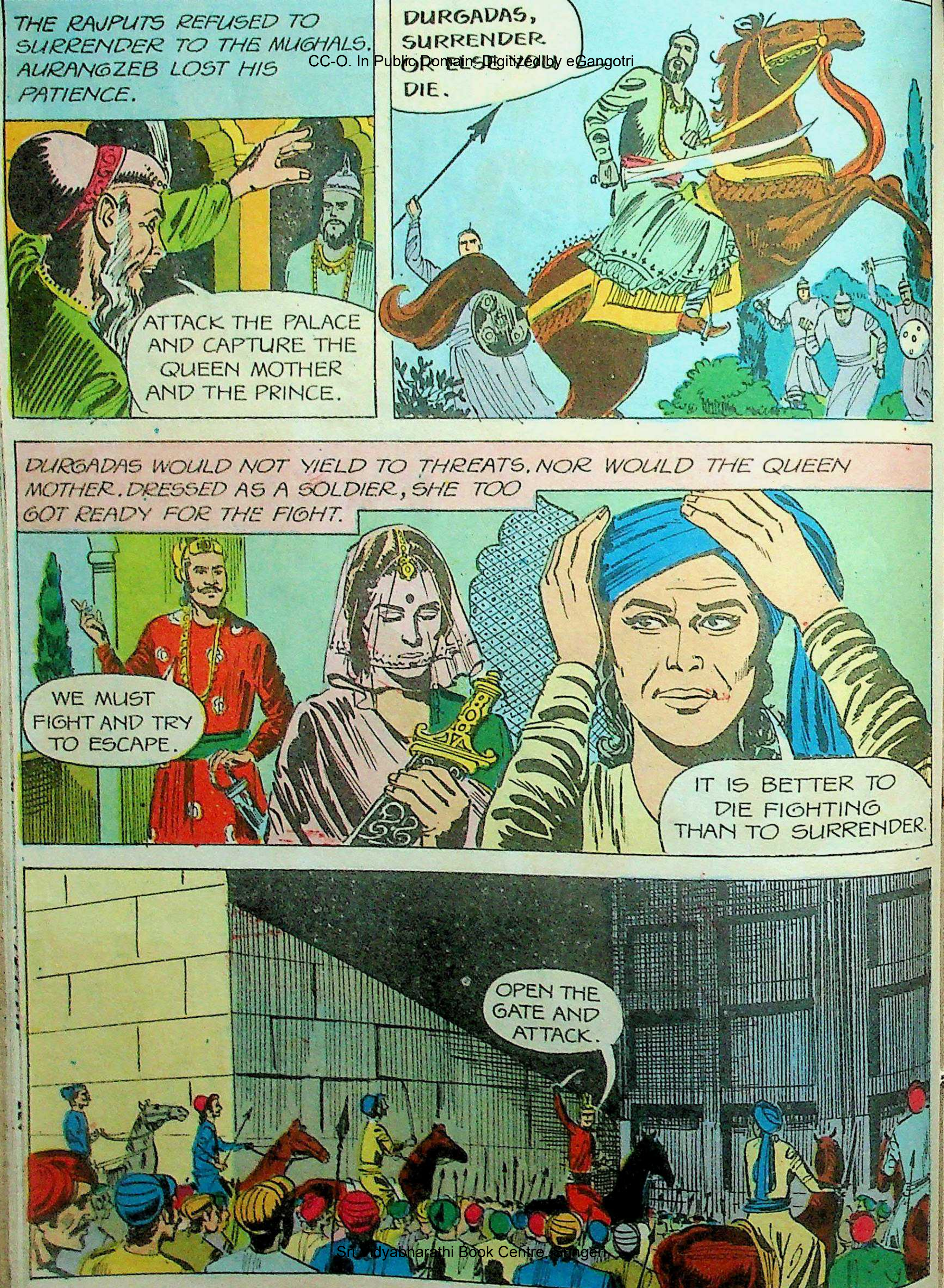

THE NEXT DAY, GOR TAK, DISGUISED AS A SWEEPER...

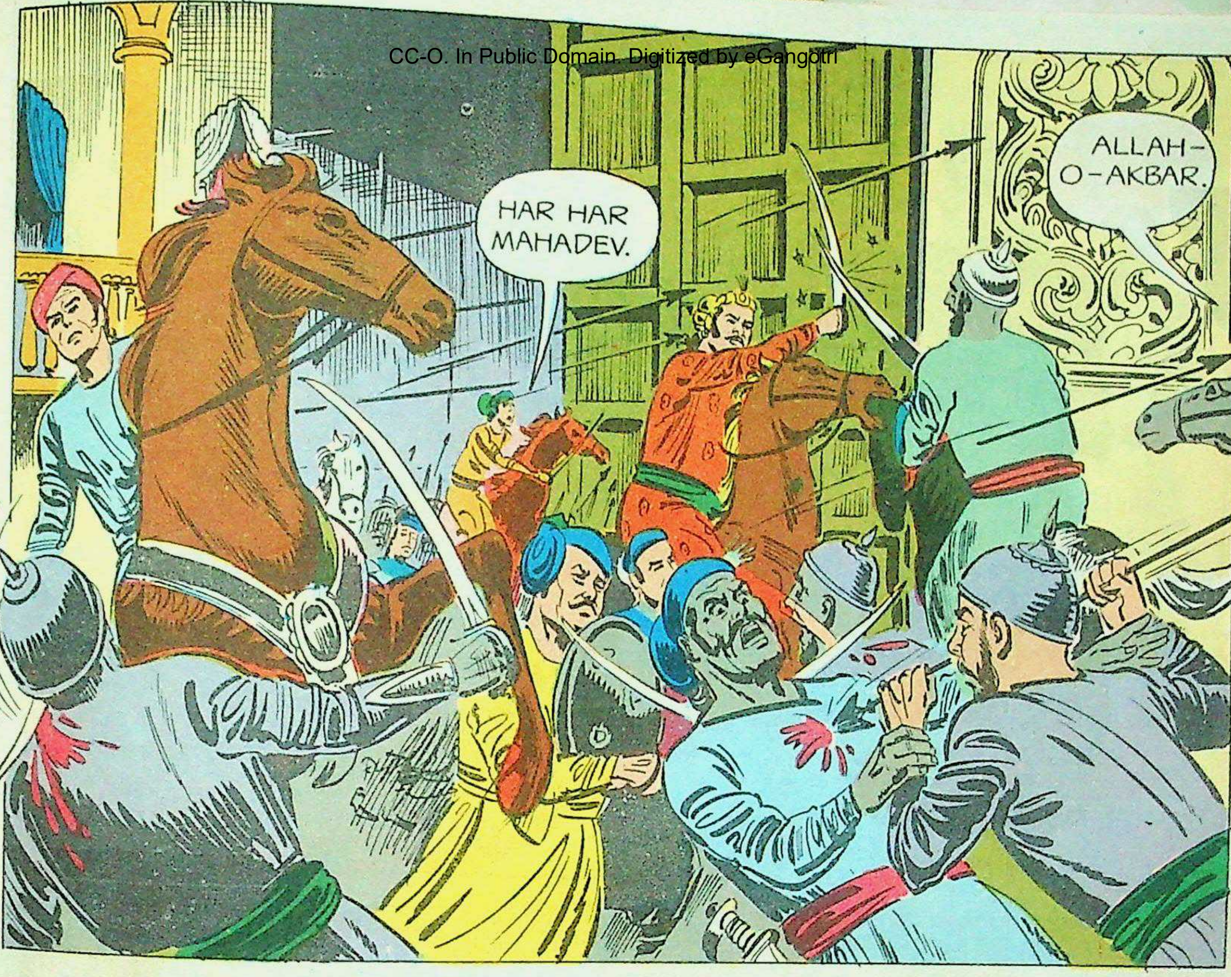

...HID THE SLEEPING PRINCE IN HER BASKET...

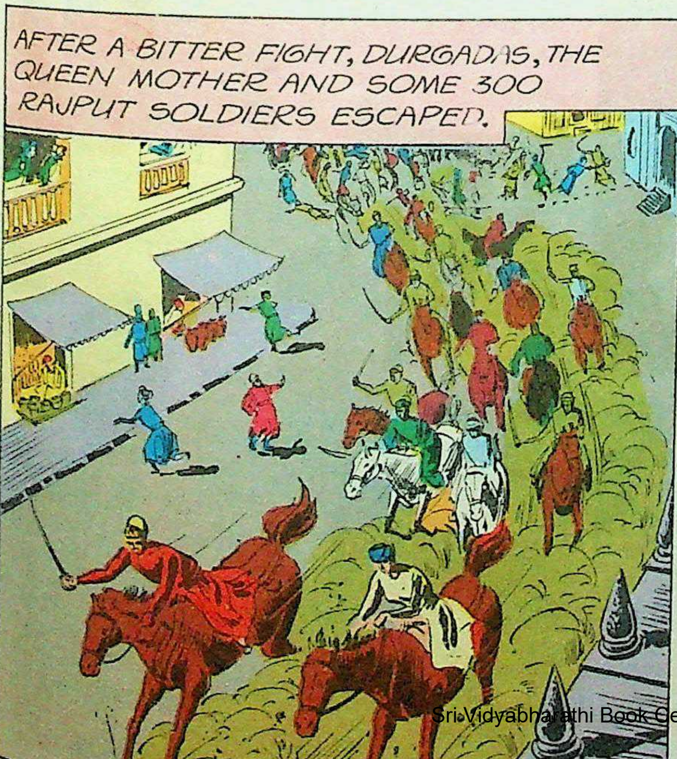

...AND AS PLANNED, TOOK HIM TO MUKUND DAS, A RAJPUT DISGUISED AS A SNAKE CHARMER.

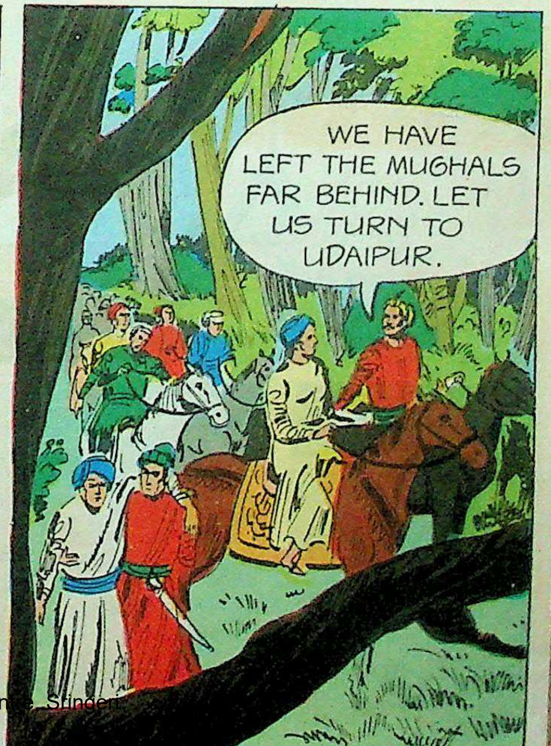

MUKUND DAS PUT THE PRINCE INTO ONE OF HIS BASKETS...

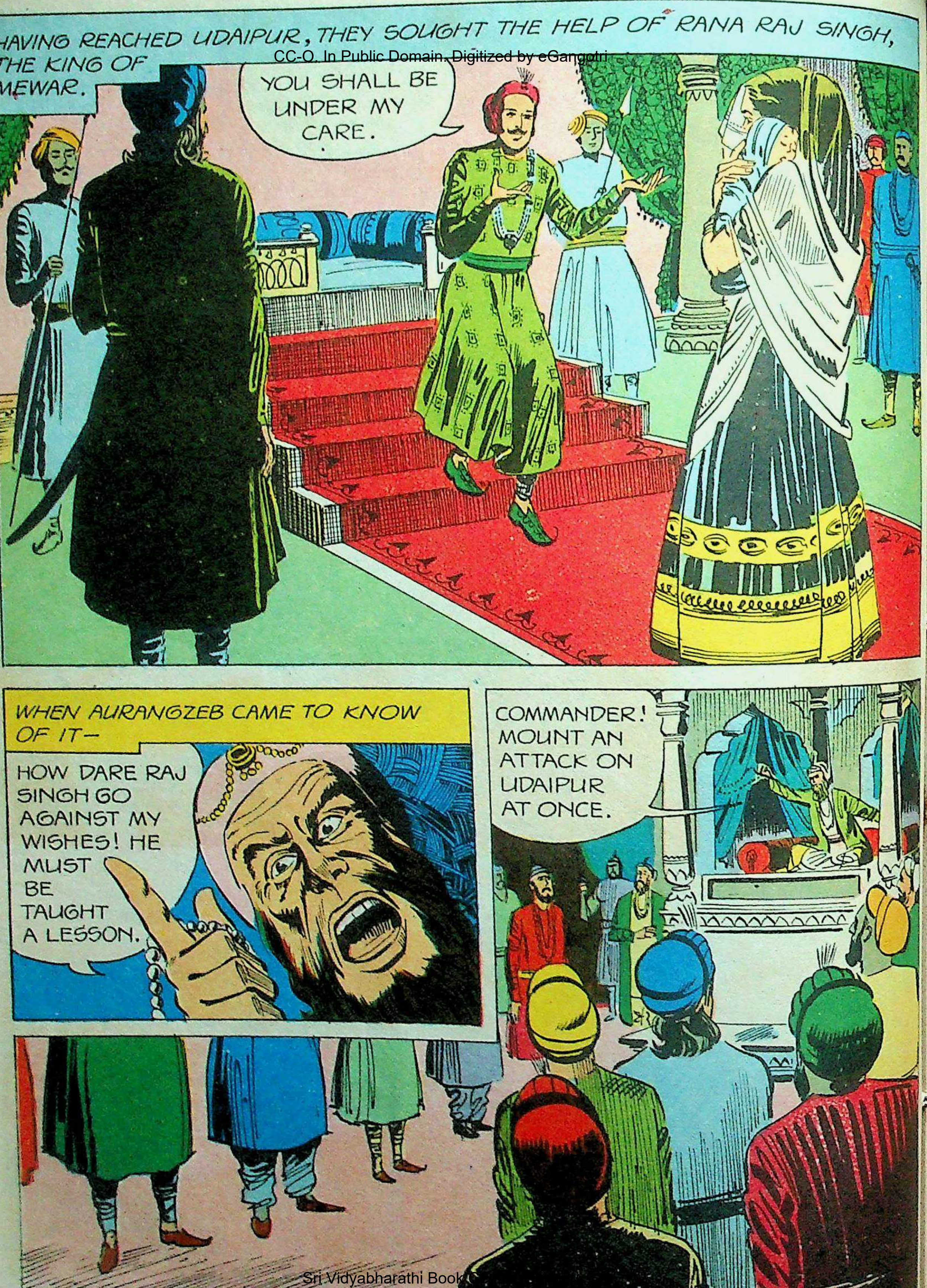

...AND LEFT FOR UDAIPUR.

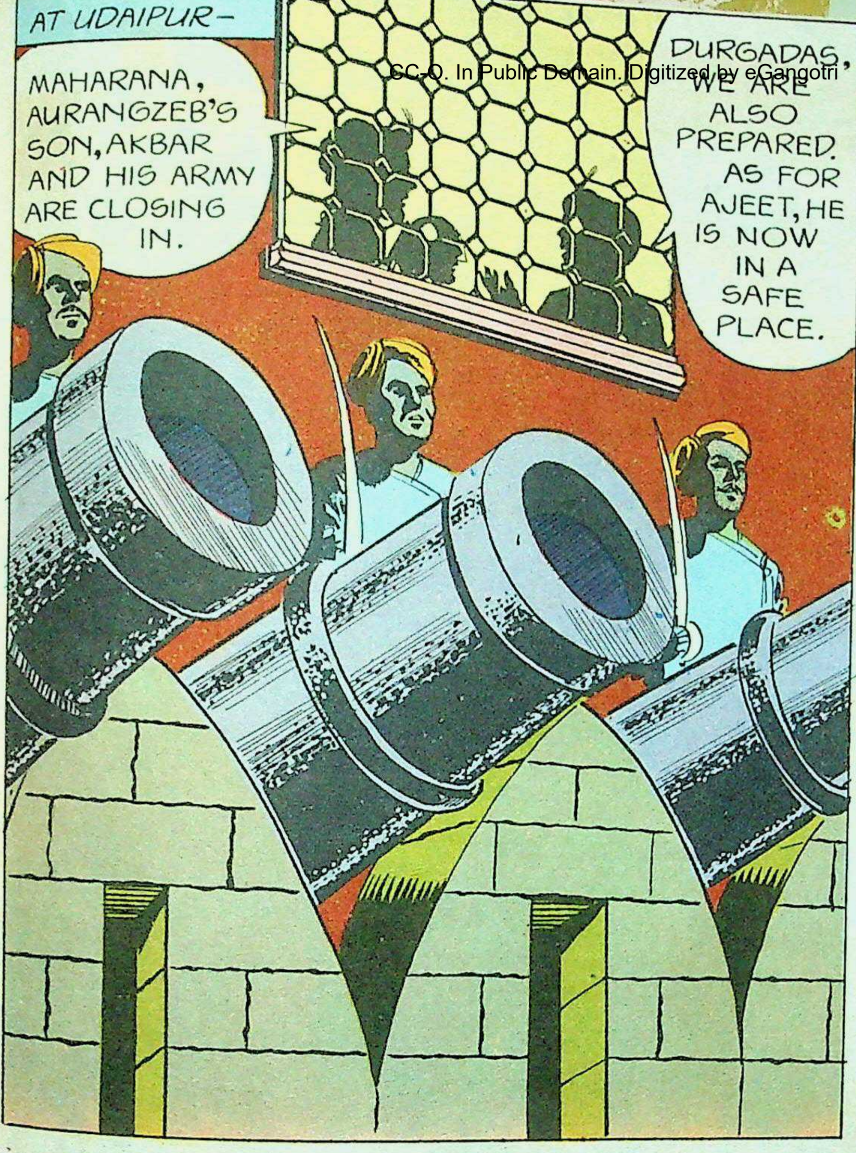

THE RAJPUTS REFUSED TO SURRENDER TO THE MUGHALS. AURANGZEB LOST HIS PATIENCE.
ATTACK THE PALACE AND CAPTURE THE QUEEN MOTHER AND THE PRINCE.
DURGADAS, SURRENDER OR ELSE YOU DIE.
DURGADAS WOULD NOT YIELD TO THREATS. NOR WOULD THE QUEEN MOTHER. DRESSED AS A SOLDIER, SHE TOO GOT READY FOR THE FIGHT.
WE MUST FIGHT AND TRY TO ESCAPE.
IT IS BETTER TO DIE FIGHTING THAN TO SURRENDER.
OPEN THE GATE AND ATTACK.


HAR HAR MAHADEV.
ALLAH-O-AKBAR.


AFTER A BITTER FIGHT, DURGADAS, THE QUEEN MOTHER AND SOME 300 RAJPUT SOLDIERS ESCAPED.

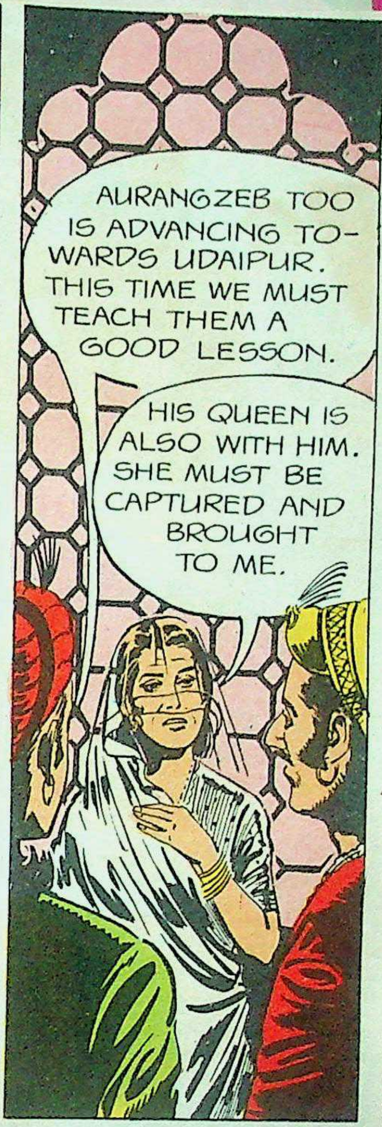

WE HAVE LEFT THE MUGHALS FAR BEHIND. LET US TURN TO UDAIPUR.


HAVING REACHED UDAIPUR, THEY SOUGHT THE HELP OF RANA RAJ SINGH, THE KING OF MEWAR.
YOU SHALL BE UNDER MY CARE.
WHEN AURANGZEB CAME TO KNOW OF IT—
HOW DARE RAJ SINGH GO AGAINST MY WISHES! HE MUST BE TAUGHT A LESSON.
COMMANDER! MOUNT AN ATTACK ON UDAIPUR AT ONCE.

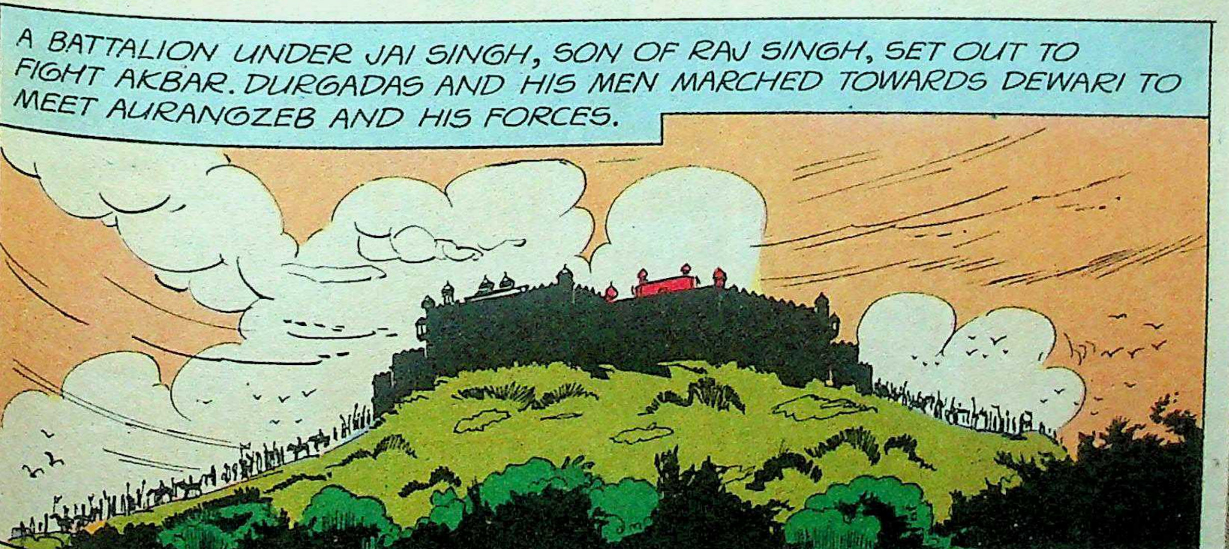


AT UDAIPUR—

MAHARANA, AURANGZEB'S SON, AKBAR AND HIS ARMY ARE CLOSING IN.
DURGADAS, WE ARE ALSO PREPARED. AS FOR AJEET, HE IS NOW IN A SAFE PLACE.

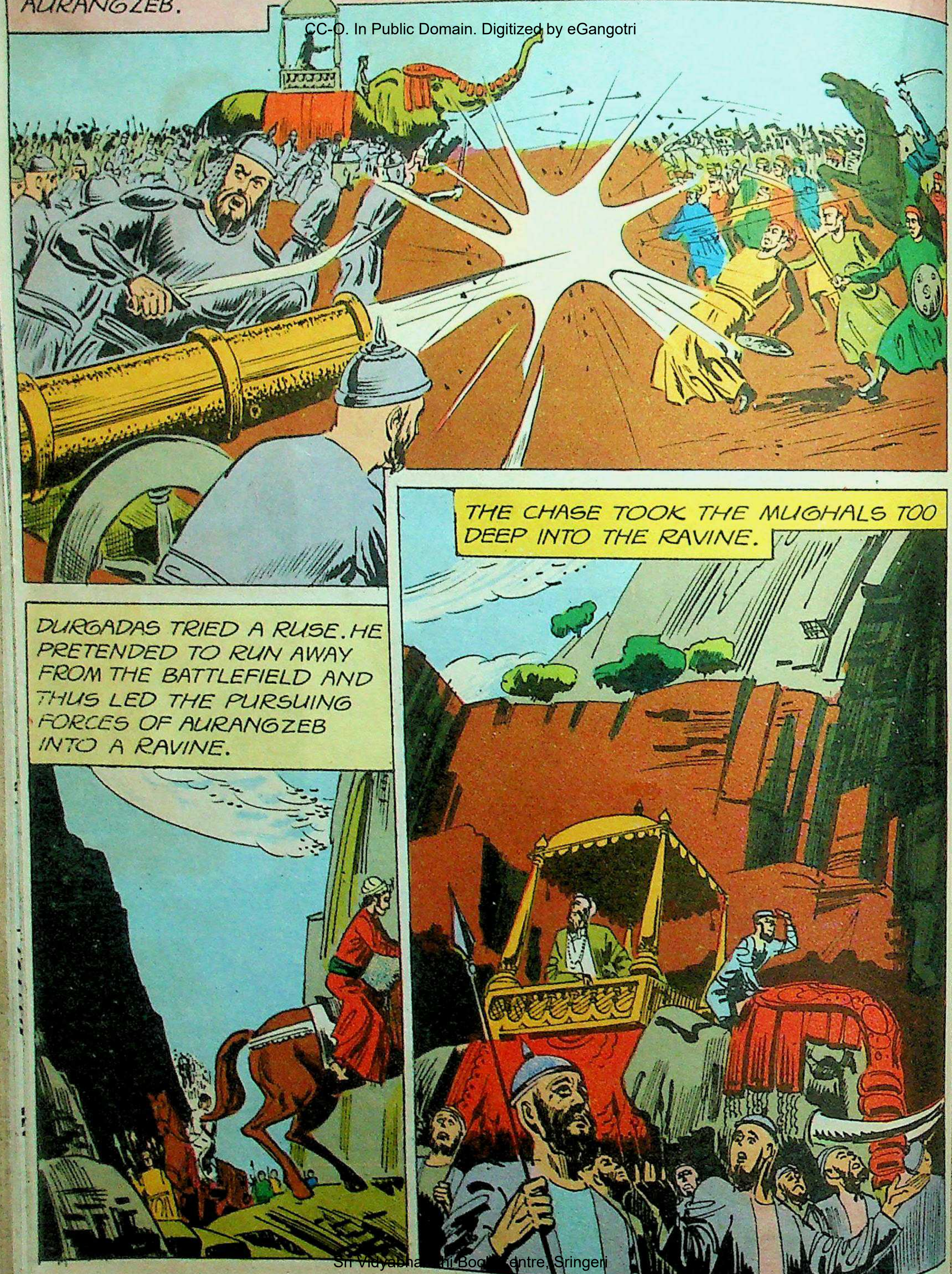


AURANGZEB TOO IS ADVANCING TOWARDS UDAIPUR. THIS TIME WE MUST TEACH THEM A GOOD LESSON.
HIS QUEEN IS ALSO WITH HIM. SHE MUST BE CAPTURED AND BROUGHT TO ME.



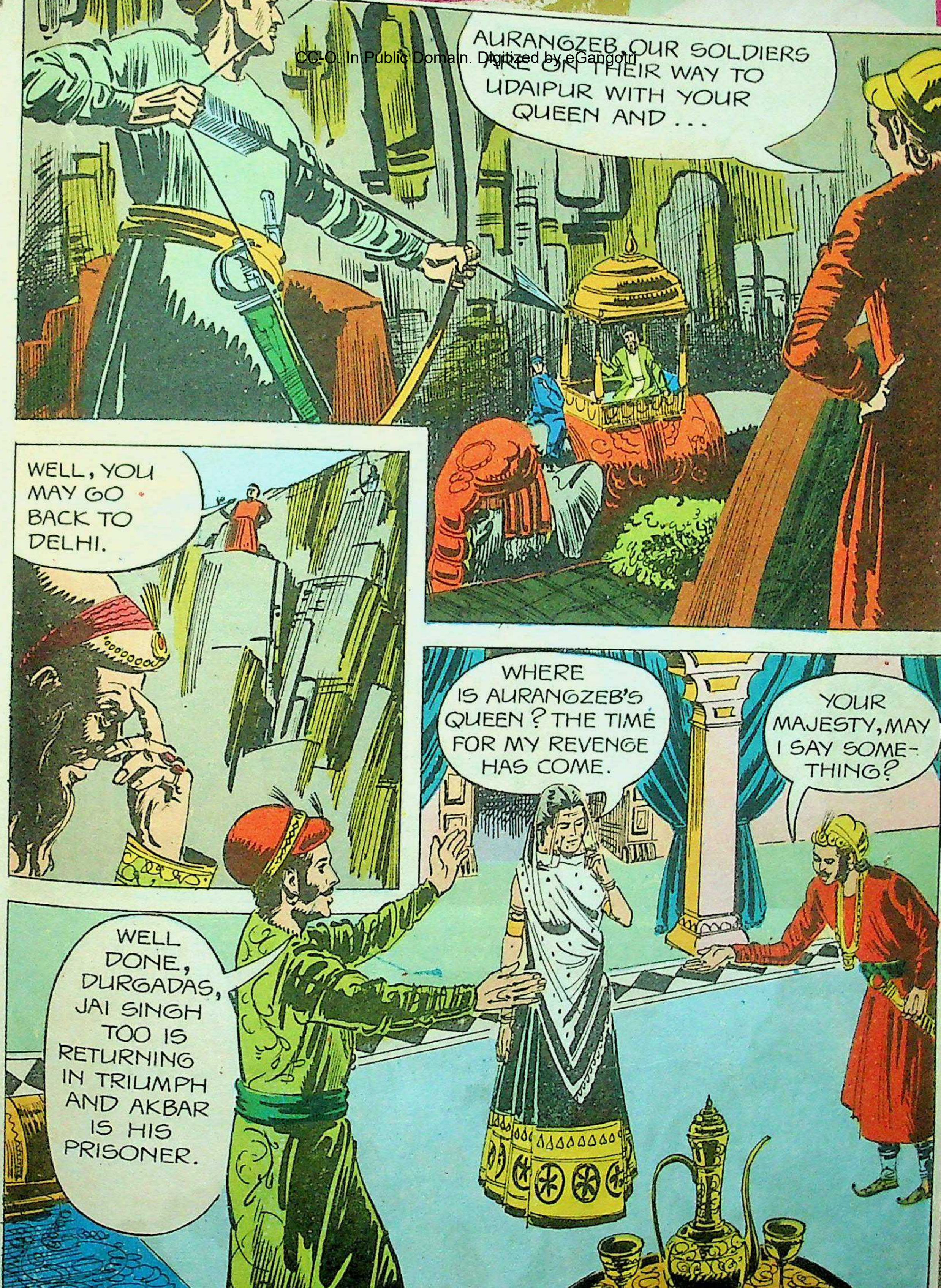
A BATTALION UNDER JAI SINGH, SON OF RAJ SINGH, SET OUT TO FIGHT AKBAR. DURGADAS AND HIS MEN MARCHED TOWARDS DEWARI TO MEET AURANGZEB AND HIS FORCES.

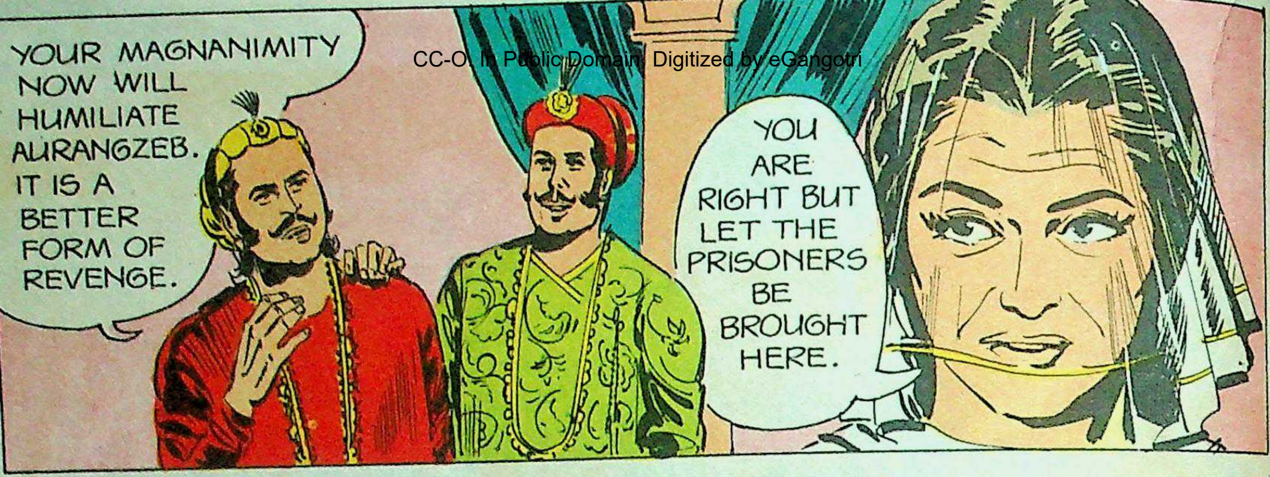
IT WAS A FIERCE BATTLE BETWEEN THE FORCES OF DURGADAS AND AURANGZEB.

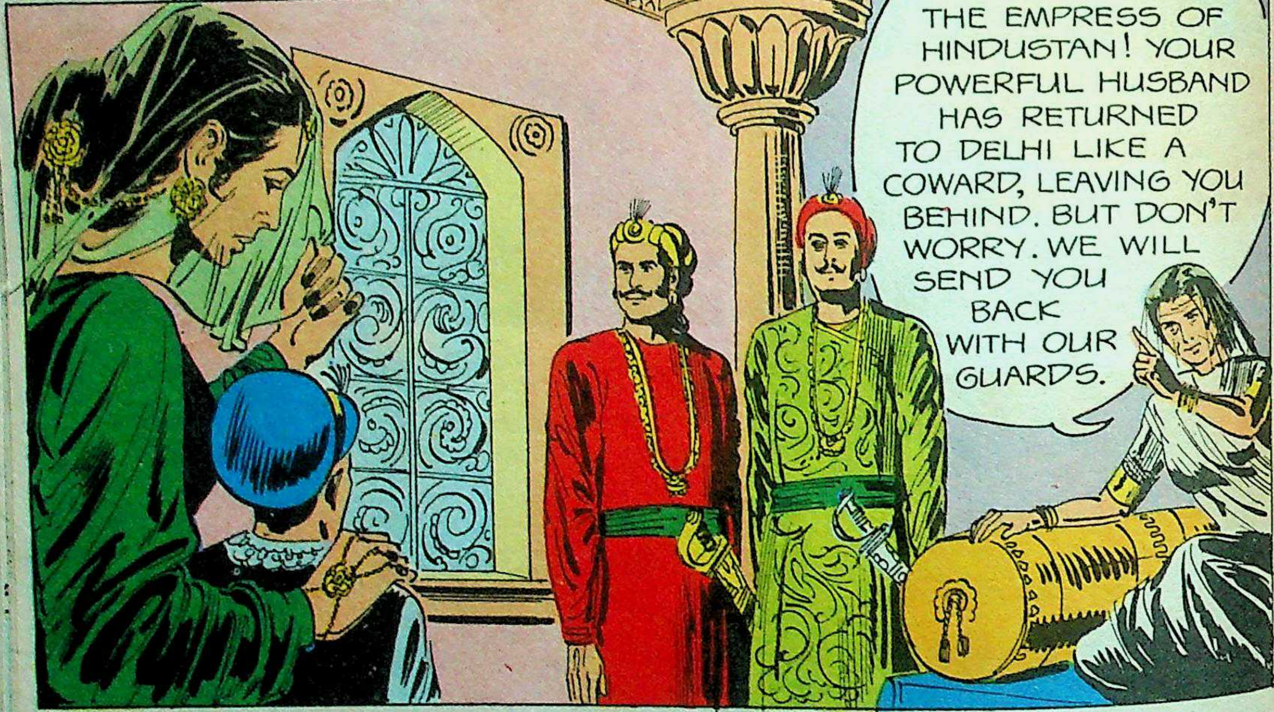


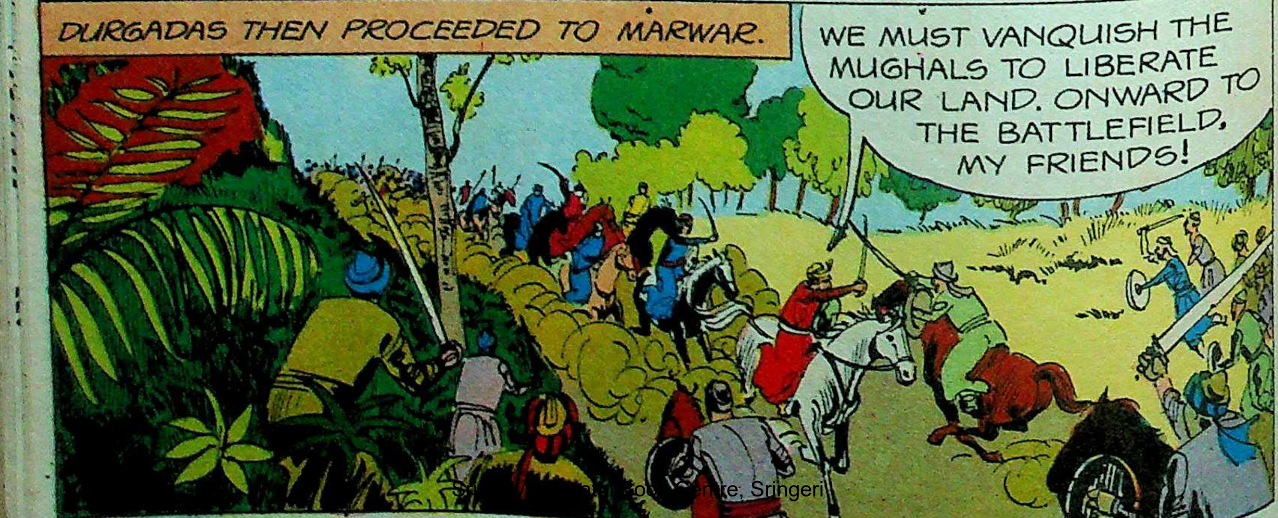
DURGADAS TRIED A RUSE. HE PRETENDED TO RUN AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD AND THUS LED THE PURSUING FORCES OF AURANGZEB INTO A RAVINE.

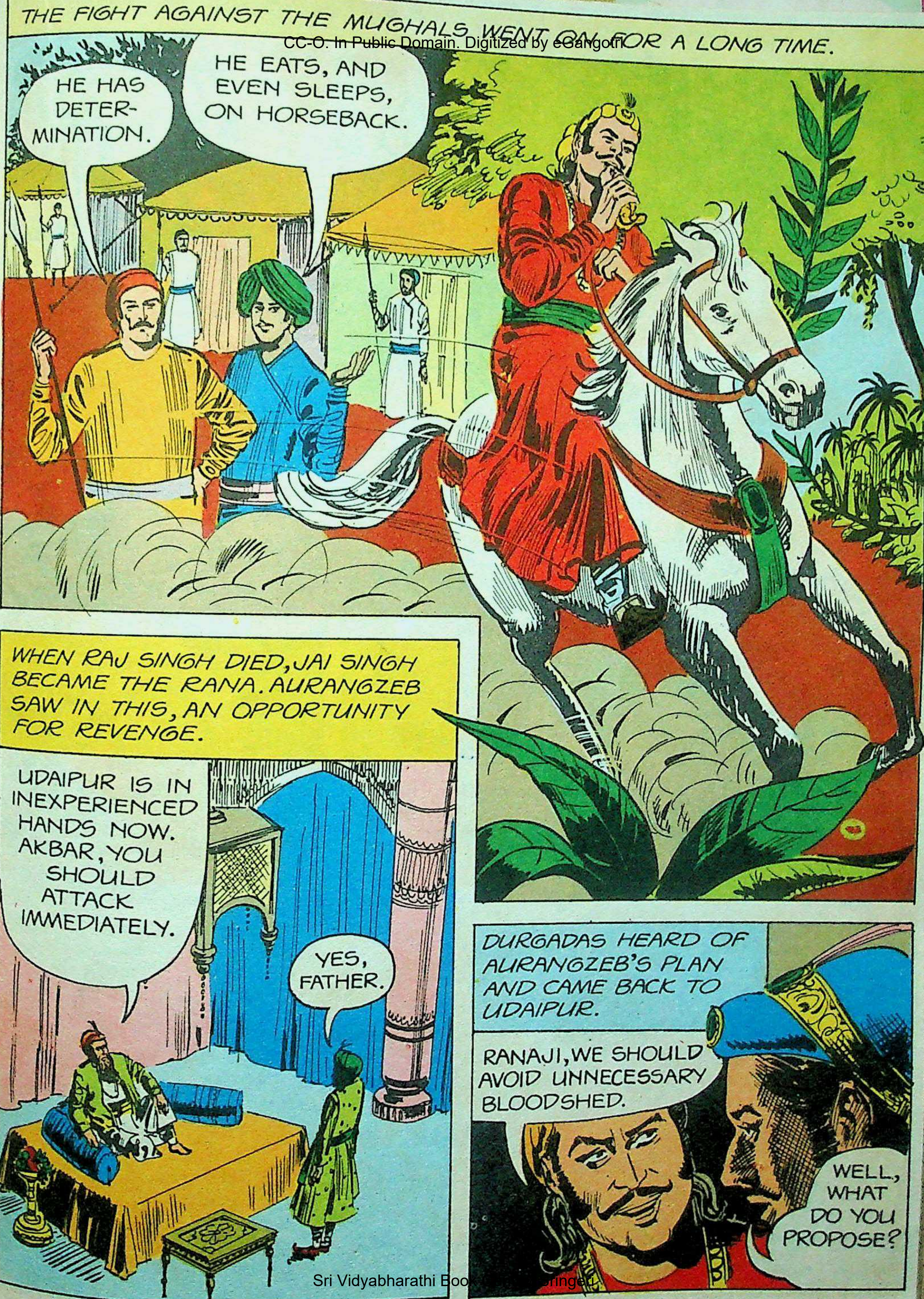
THE CHASE TOOK THE MUGHALS TOO DEEP INTO THE RAVINE.


AURANGZEB, OUR SOLDIERS ARE ON THEIR WAY TO UDAIPUR WITH YOUR QUEEN AND . . .
WELL, YOU MAY GO BACK TO DELHI.
WHERE IS AURANGZEB'S QUEEN ? THE TIME FOR MY REVENGE HAS COME.
YOUR MAJESTY, MAY I SAY SOMETHING?
WELL DONE, DURGADAS, JAI SINGH TOO IS RETURNING IN TRIUMPH AND AKBAR IS HIS PRISONER.


YOUR MAGNANIMITY NOW WILL HUMILIATE AURANGZEB. IT IS A BETTER FORM OF REVENGE.
YOU ARE RIGHT BUT LET THE PRISONERS BE BROUGHT HERE.


THE EMPRESS OF HINDUSTAN! YOUR POWERFUL HUSBAND HAS RETURNED TO DELHI LIKE A COWARD, LEAVING YOU BEHIND. BUT DON'T WORRY. WE WILL SEND YOU BACK WITH OUR GUARDS.


DURGADAS THEN PROCEEDED TO MARWAR.
WE MUST VANQUISH THE MUGHALS TO LIBERATE OUR LAND. ONWARD TO THE BATTLEFIELD, MY FRIENDS!



THE FIGHT AGAINST THE MUGHALS WENT ON FOR A LONG TIME.

HE HAS DETERMINATION.
HE EATS, AND EVEN SLEEPS, ON HORSEBACK.

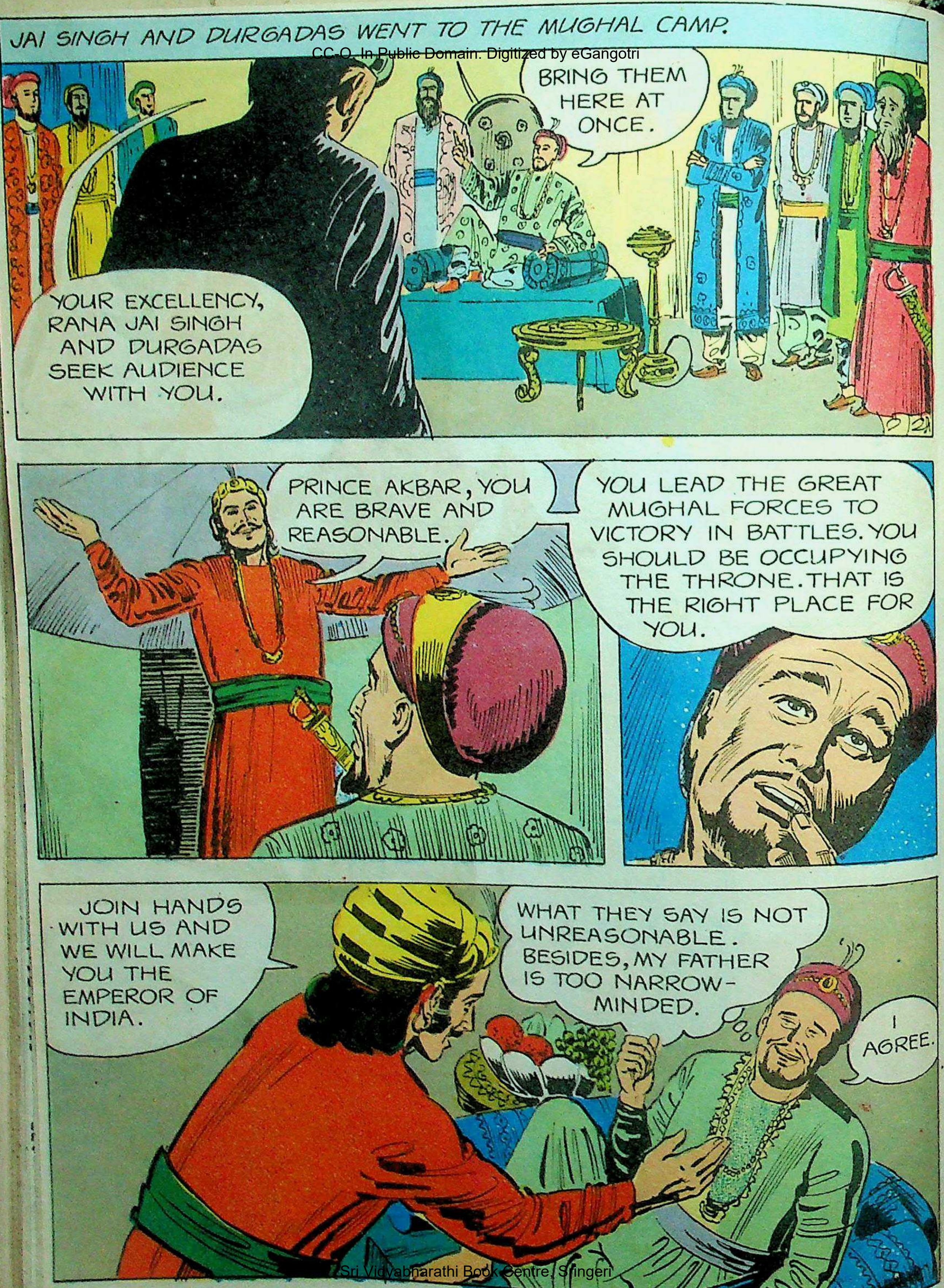
WHEN RAJ SINGH DIED, JAI SINGH BECAME THE RANA. AURANGZEB SAW IN THIS, AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REVENGE.

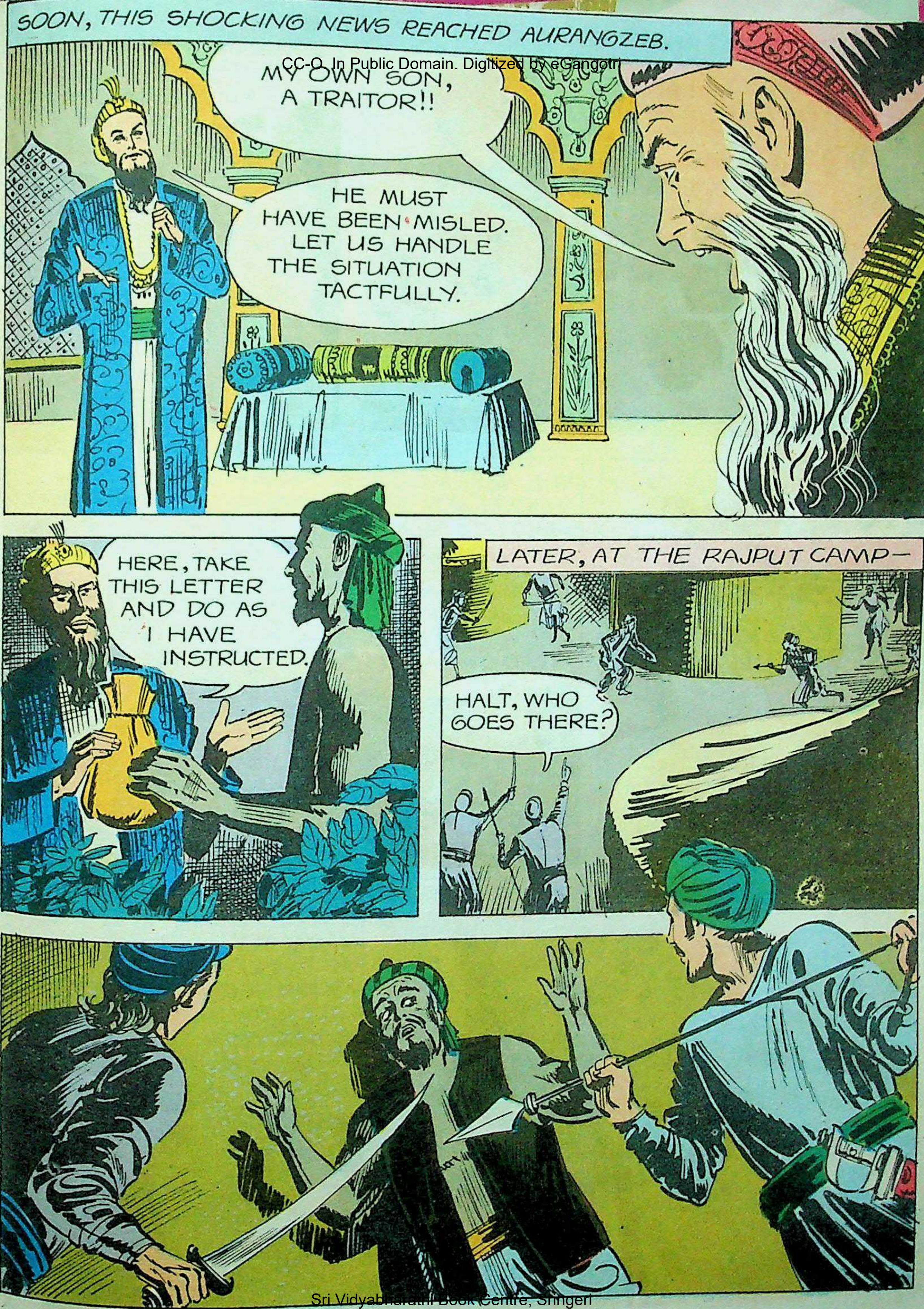
UDAIPUR IS IN INEXPERIENCED HANDS NOW. AKBAR, YOU SHOULD ATTACK IMMEDIATELY.
YES, FATHER.

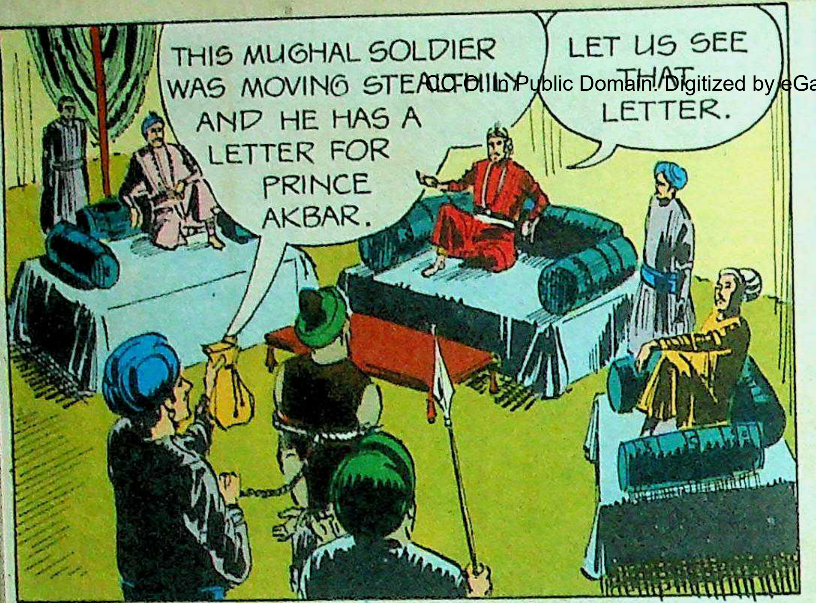
DURGADAS HEARD OF AURANGZEB'S PLAN AND CAME BACK TO UDAIPUR.

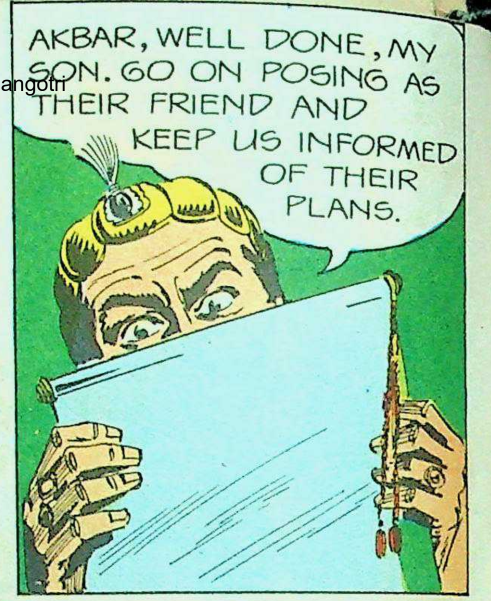
RANAJI, WE SHOULD AVOID UNNECESSARY BLOODSHED.
WELL, WHAT DO YOU PROPOSE?

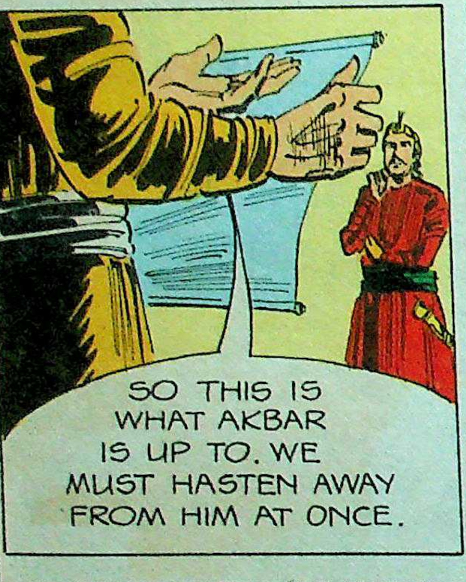
Sri Vidyabharathi Boo... ...ringeri

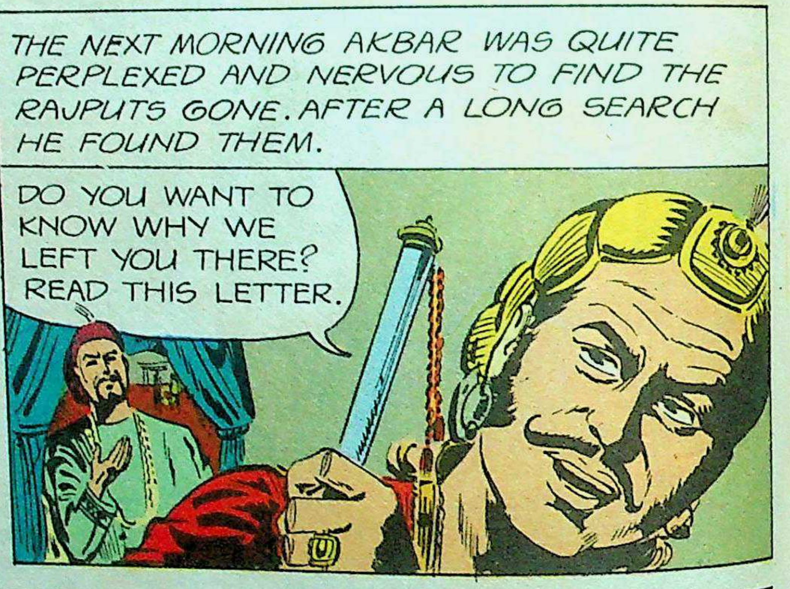

JAI SINGH AND DURGADAS WENT TO THE MUGHAL CAMP.
YOUR EXCELLENCY, RANA JAI SINGH AND DURGADAS SEEK AUDIENCE WITH YOU.
BRING THEM HERE AT ONCE.
PRINCE AKBAR, YOU ARE BRAVE AND REASONABLE.
YOU LEAD THE GREAT MUGHAL FORCES TO VICTORY IN BATTLES. YOU SHOULD BE OCCUPYING THE THRONE. THAT IS THE RIGHT PLACE FOR YOU.
JOIN HANDS WITH US AND WE WILL MAKE YOU THE EMPEROR OF INDIA.
WHAT THEY SAY IS NOT UNREASONABLE. BESIDES, MY FATHER IS TOO NARROW-MINDED.
I AGREE.

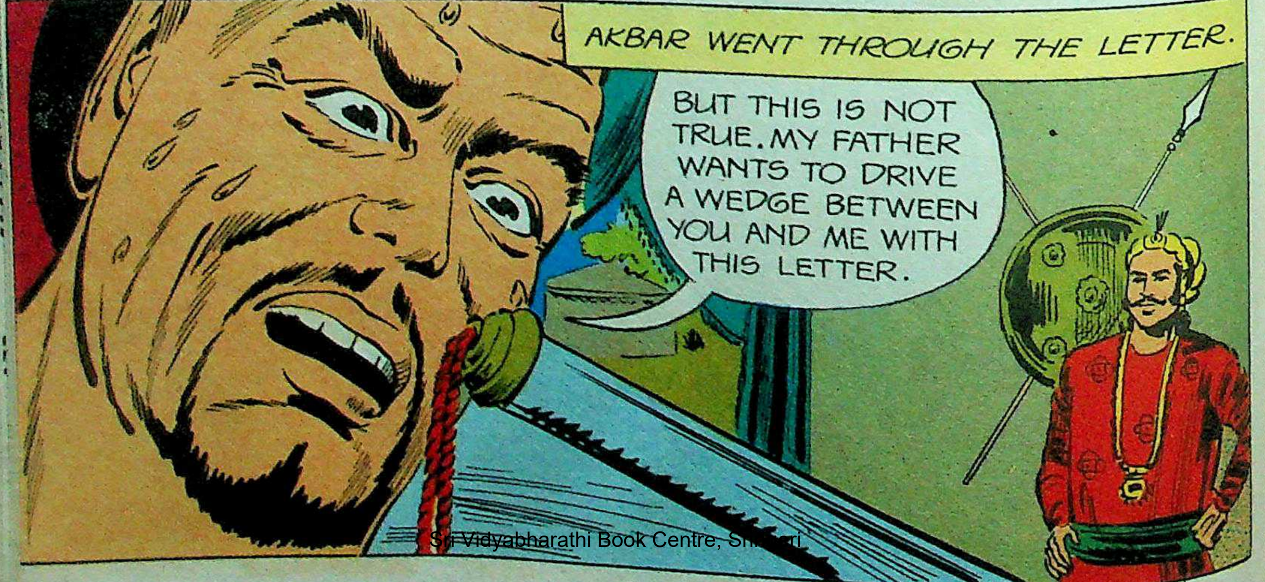

SOON, THIS SHOCKING NEWS REACHED AURANGZEB.
MY OWN SON, A TRAITOR!!
HE MUST HAVE BEEN MISLED. LET US HANDLE THE SITUATION TACTFULLY.
HERE, TAKE THIS LETTER AND DO AS I HAVE INSTRUCTED.
LATER, AT THE RAJPUT CAMP—
HALT, WHO GOES THERE?

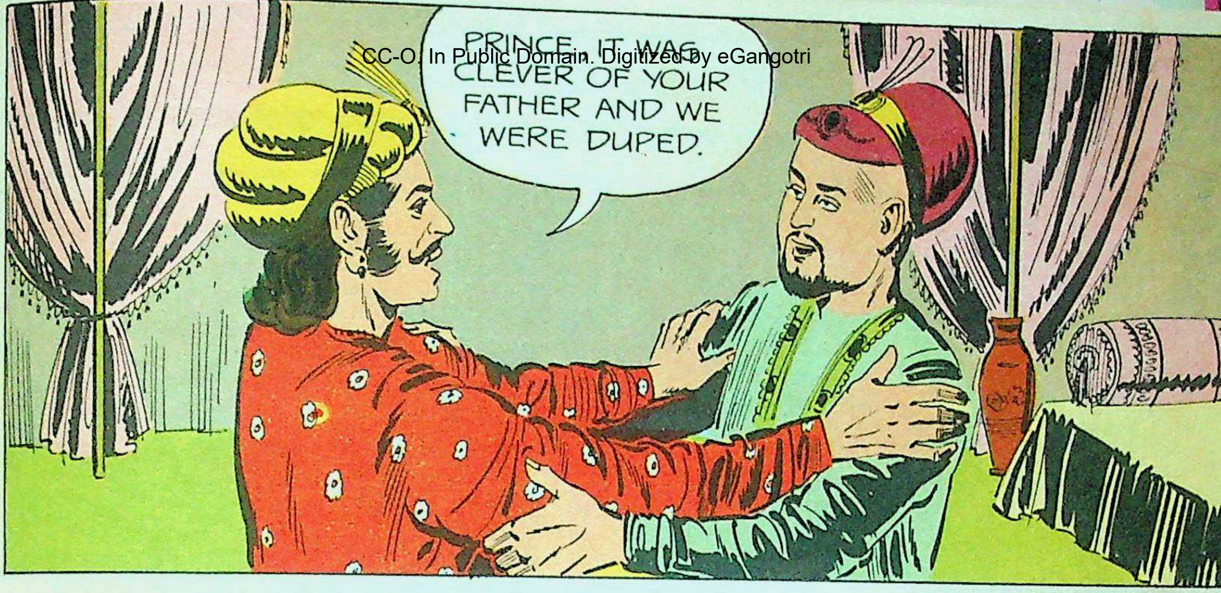

THIS MUGHAL SOLDIER WAS MOVING STEALTHILY AND HE HAS A LETTER FOR PRINCE AKBAR.
LET US SEE THAT LETTER.

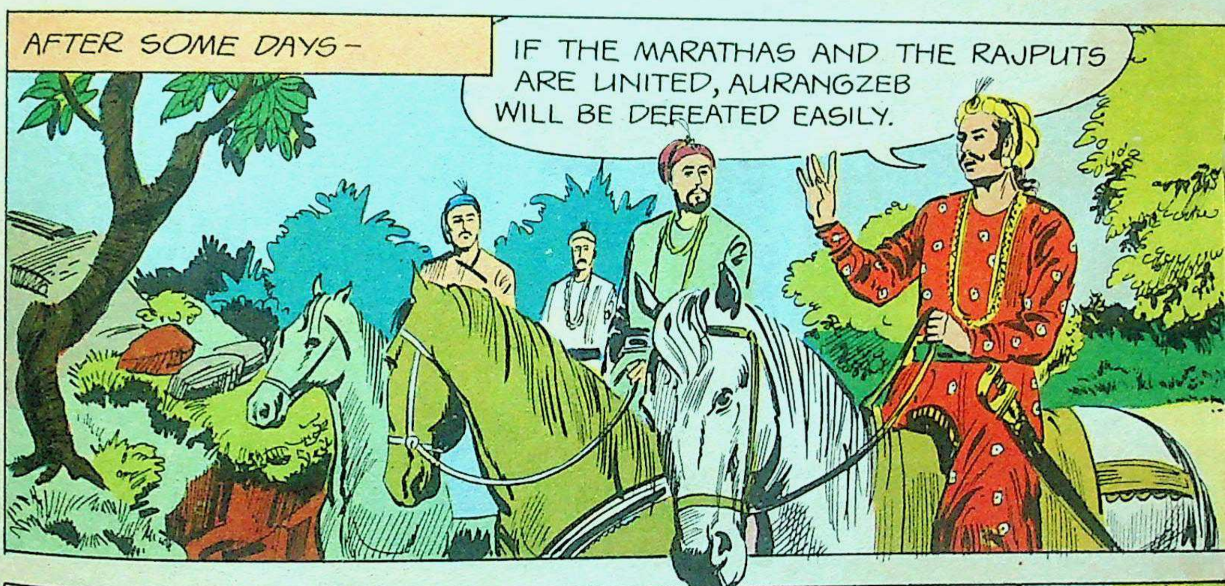

AKBAR, WELL DONE, MY SON. GO ON POSING AS THEIR FRIEND AND KEEP US INFORMED OF THEIR PLANS.

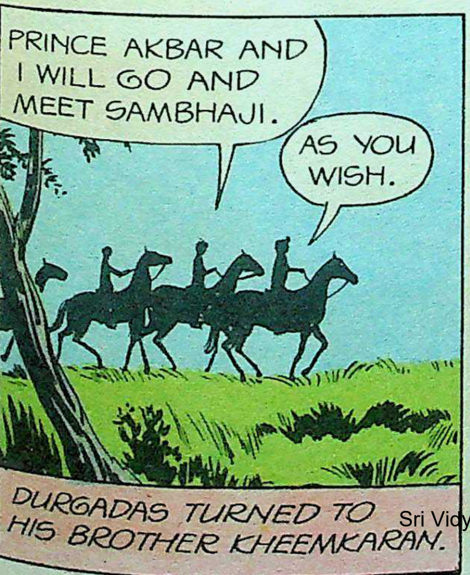

SO THIS IS WHAT AKBAR IS UP TO. WE MUST HASTEN AWAY FROM HIM AT ONCE.

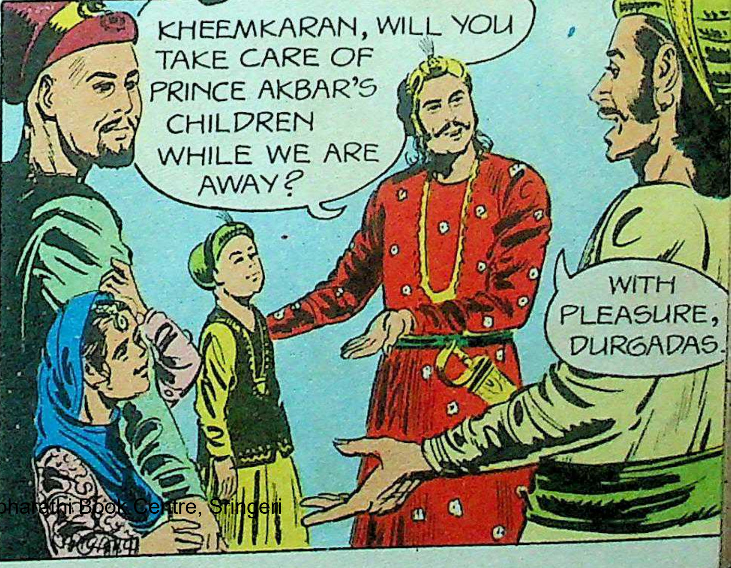

THE NEXT MORNING AKBAR WAS QUITE PERPLEXED AND NERVOUS TO FIND THE RAJPUTS GONE. AFTER A LONG SEARCH HE FOUND THEM.
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY WE LEFT YOU THERE? READ THIS LETTER.


AKBAR WENT THROUGH THE LETTER.
BUT THIS IS NOT TRUE. MY FATHER WANTS TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN YOU AND ME WITH THIS LETTER.

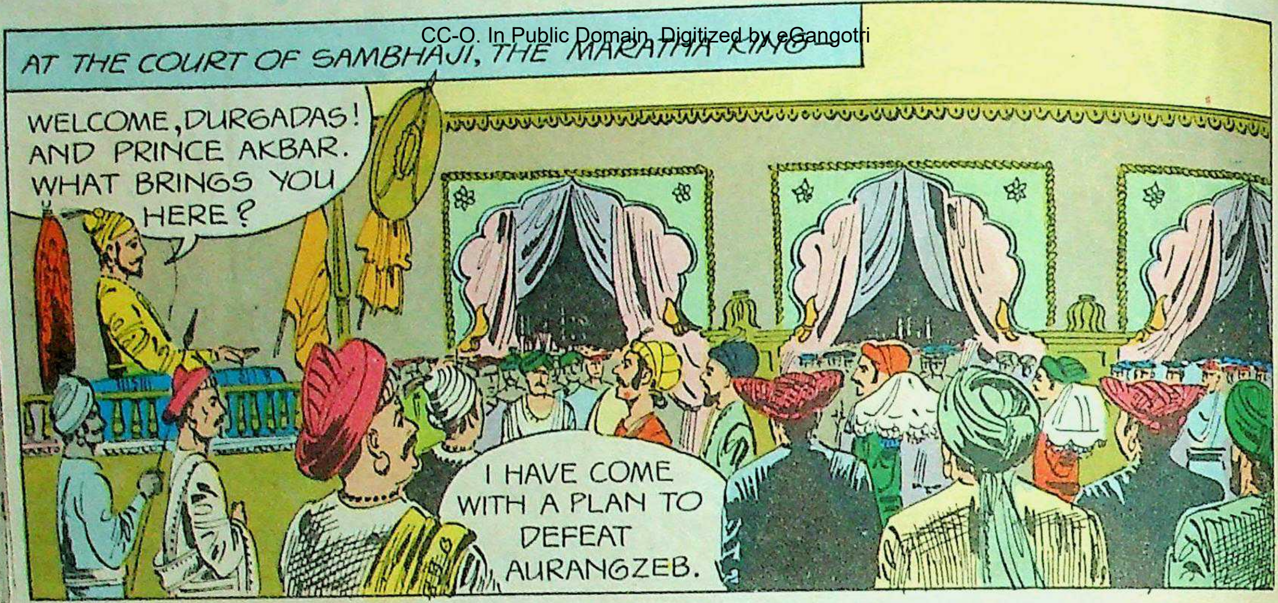

PRINCE, IT WAS CLEVER OF YOUR FATHER AND WE WERE DUPED.

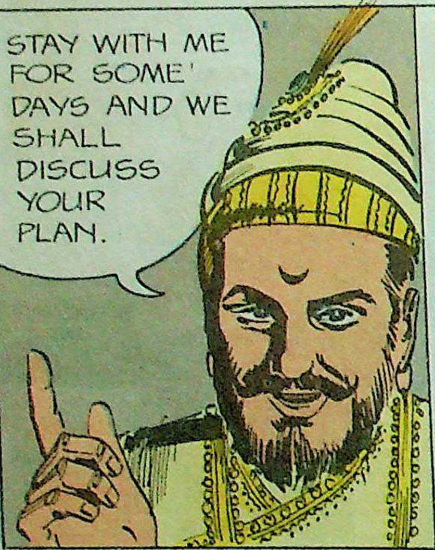

AFTER SOME DAYS—
IF THE MARATHAS AND THE RAJPUTS ARE UNITED, AURANGZEB WILL BE DEFEATED EASILY.


PRINCE AKBAR AND I WILL GO AND MEET SAMBHAJI.
AS YOU WISH.
DURGADAS TURNED TO HIS BROTHER KHEEMKARAN.

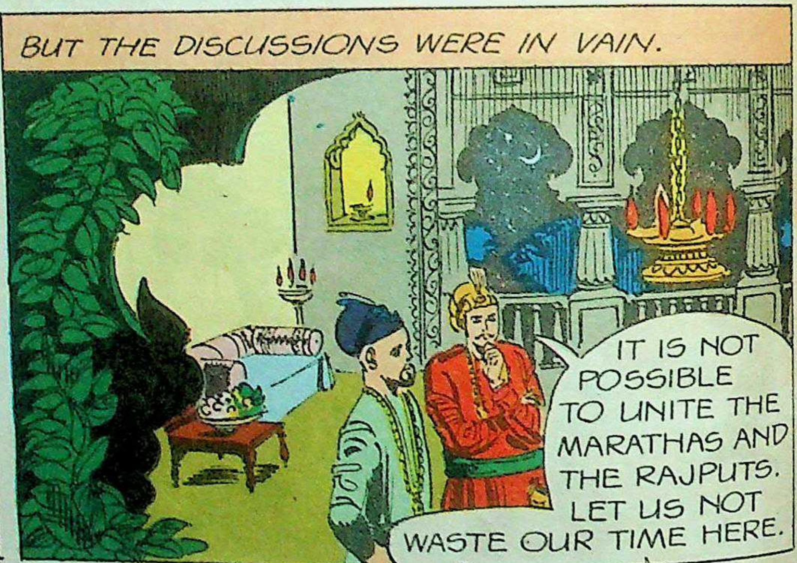

KHEEMKARAN, WILL YOU TAKE CARE OF PRINCE AKBAR'S CHILDREN WHILE WE ARE AWAY?
WITH PLEASURE, DURGADAS.

AT THE COURT OF SAMBHAJI, THE MARATHA KING—

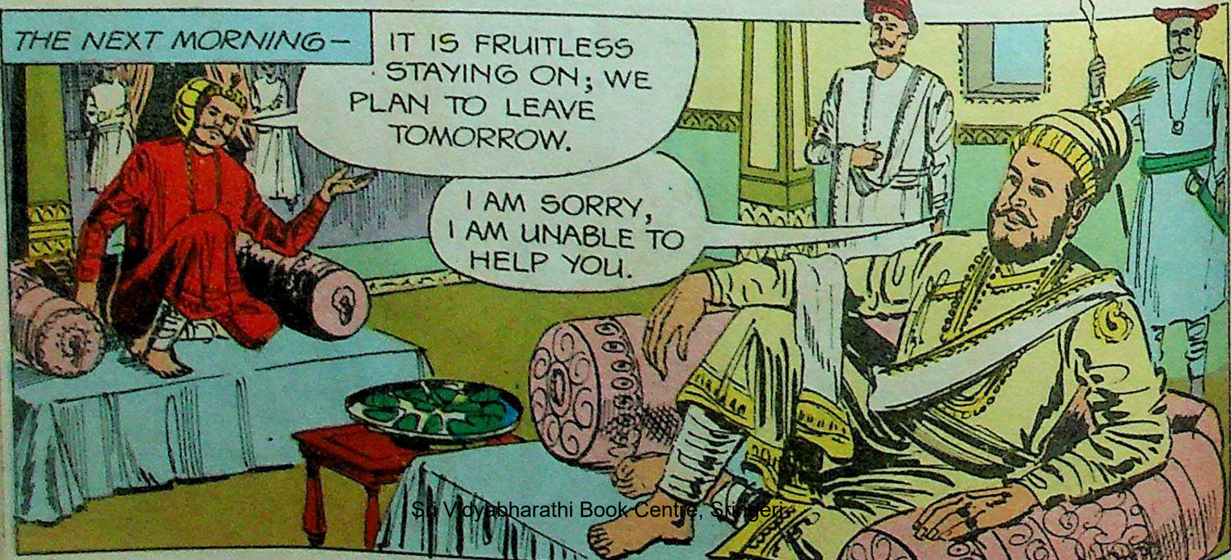

WELCOME, DURGADAS! AND PRINCE AKBAR. WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE?
I HAVE COME WITH A PLAN TO DEFEAT AURANGZEB.


STAY WITH ME FOR SOME DAYS AND WE SHALL DISCUSS YOUR PLAN.

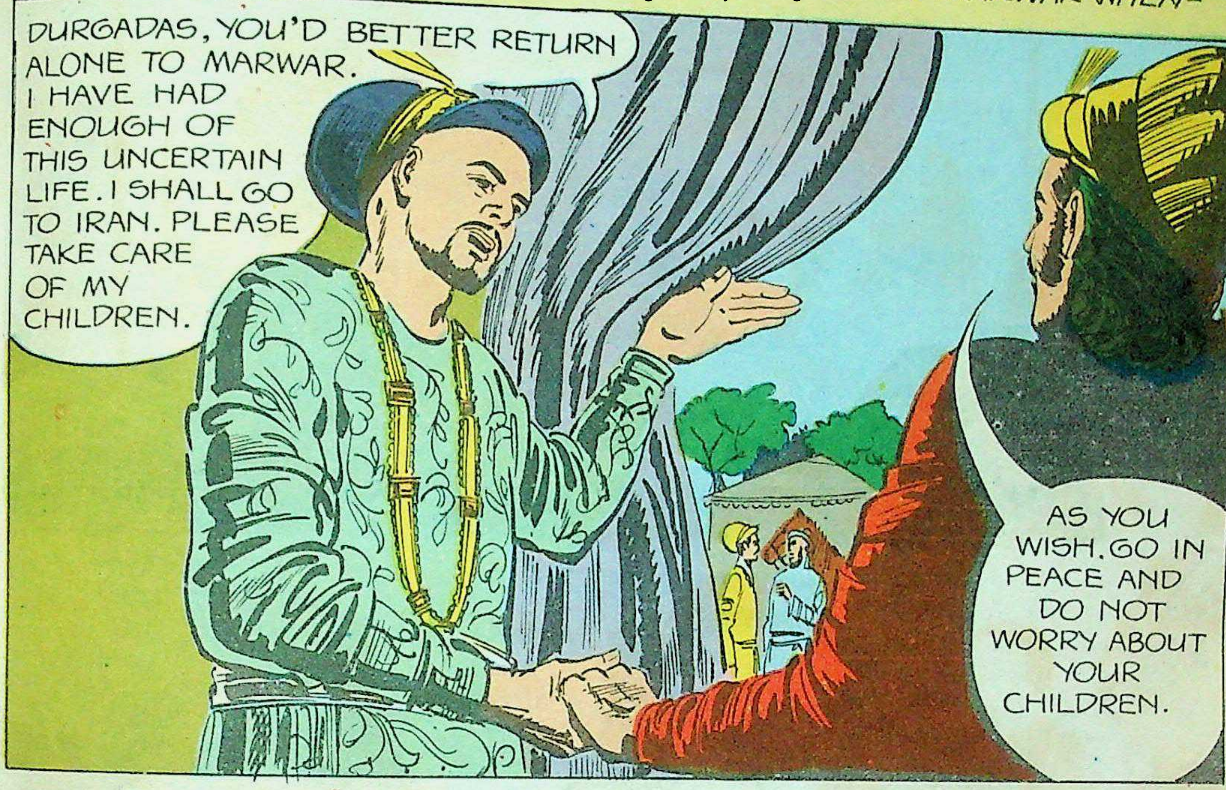
BUT THE DISCUSSIONS WERE IN VAIN.


IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO UNITE THE MARATHAS AND THE RAJPUTS. LET US NOT WASTE OUR TIME HERE.

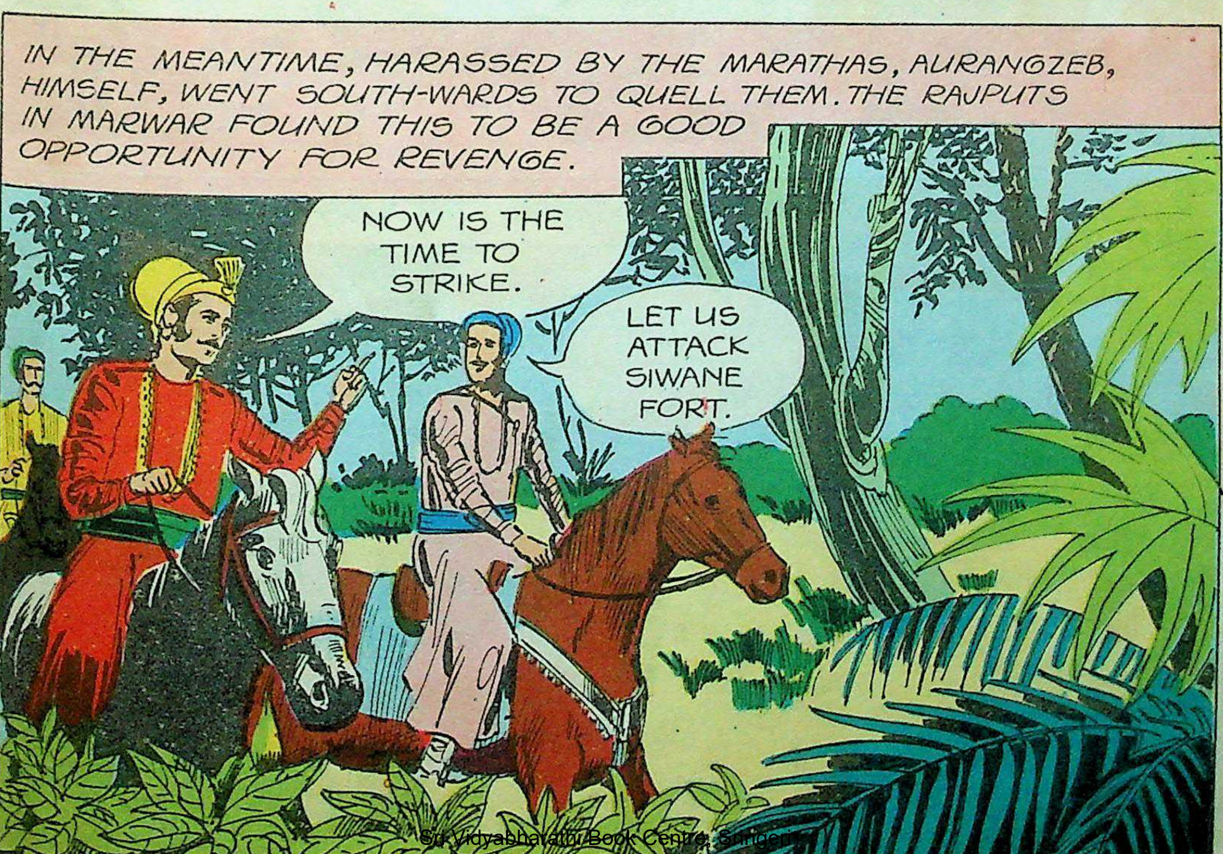
THE NEXT MORNING—


IT IS FRUITLESS STAYING ON; WE PLAN TO LEAVE TOMORROW.
I AM SORRY, I AM UNABLE TO HELP YOU.

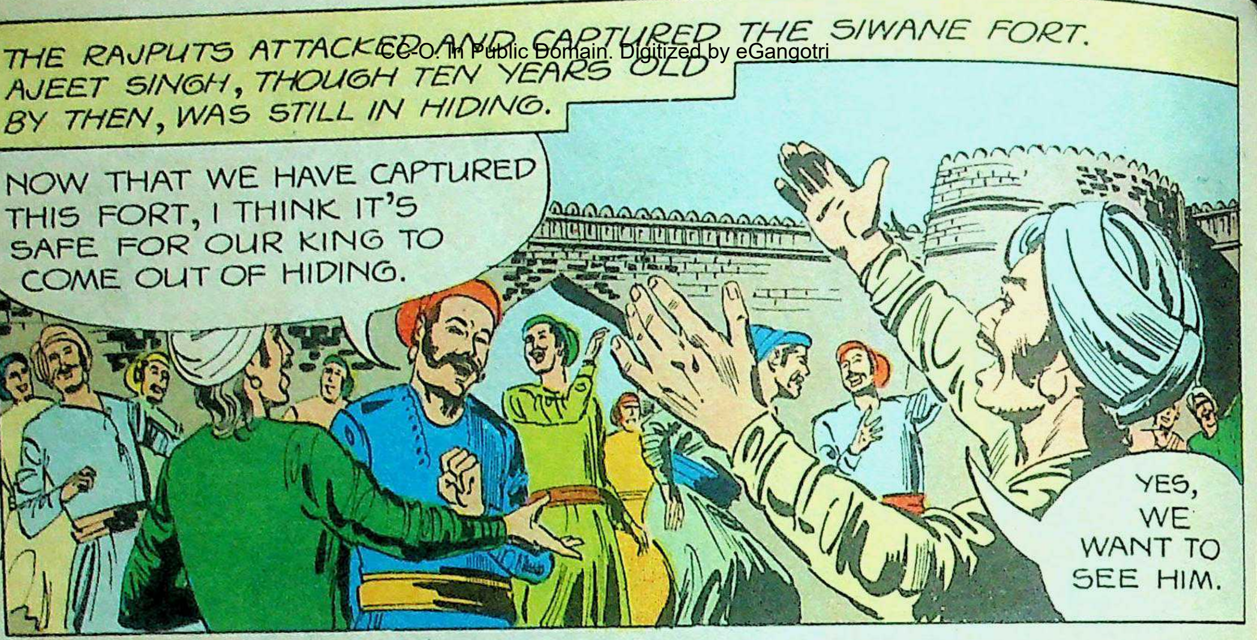
DURGADAS WITH PRINCE AKBAR WAS ON HIS WAY TO MARWAR WHEN–

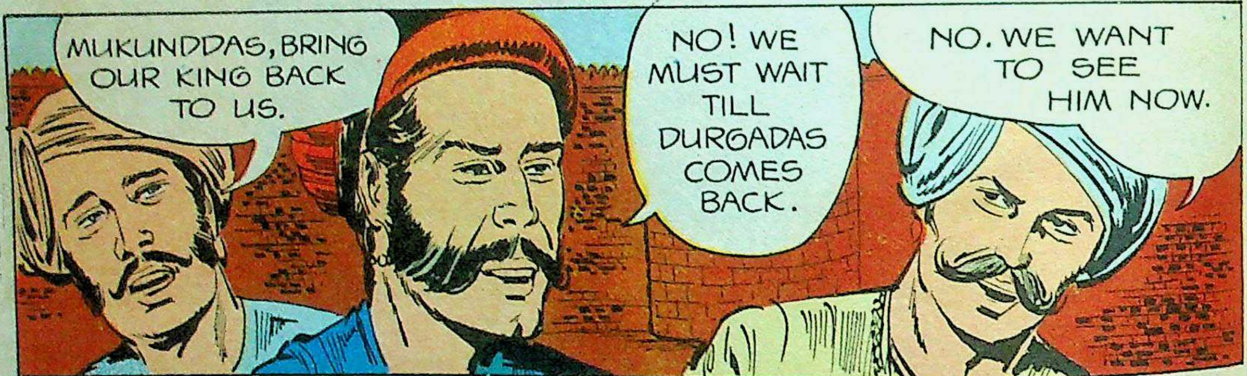

DURGADAS, YOU'D BETTER RETURN ALONE TO MARWAR. I HAVE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS UNCERTAIN LIFE. I SHALL GO TO IRAN. PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY CHILDREN.
AS YOU WISH. GO IN PEACE AND DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN.

IN THE MEANTIME, HARASSED BY THE MARATHAS, AURANGZEB, HIMSELF, WENT SOUTH-WARDS TO QUELL THEM. THE RAJPUTS IN MARWAR FOUND THIS TO BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR REVENGE.

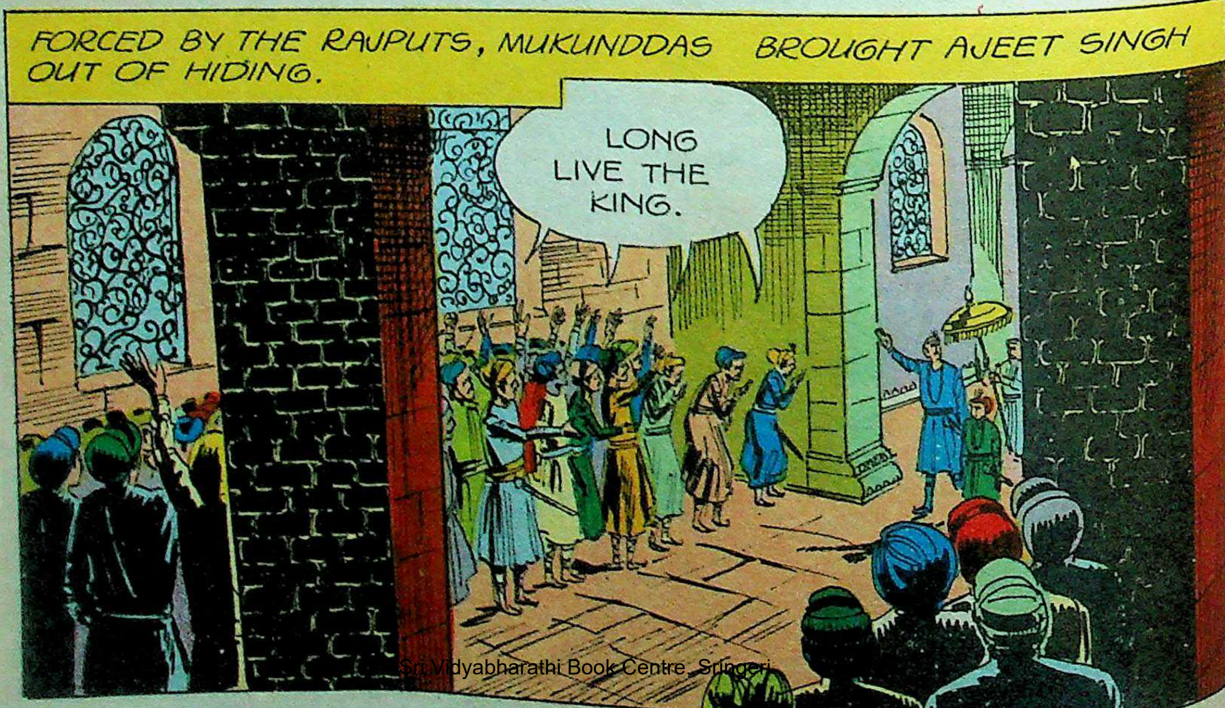

NOW IS THE TIME TO STRIKE.
LET US ATTACK SIWANE FORT.

THE RAJPUTS ATTACKED AND CAPTURED THE SIWANE FORT. AJEET SINGH, THOUGH TEN YEARS OLD BY THEN, WAS STILL IN HIDING.

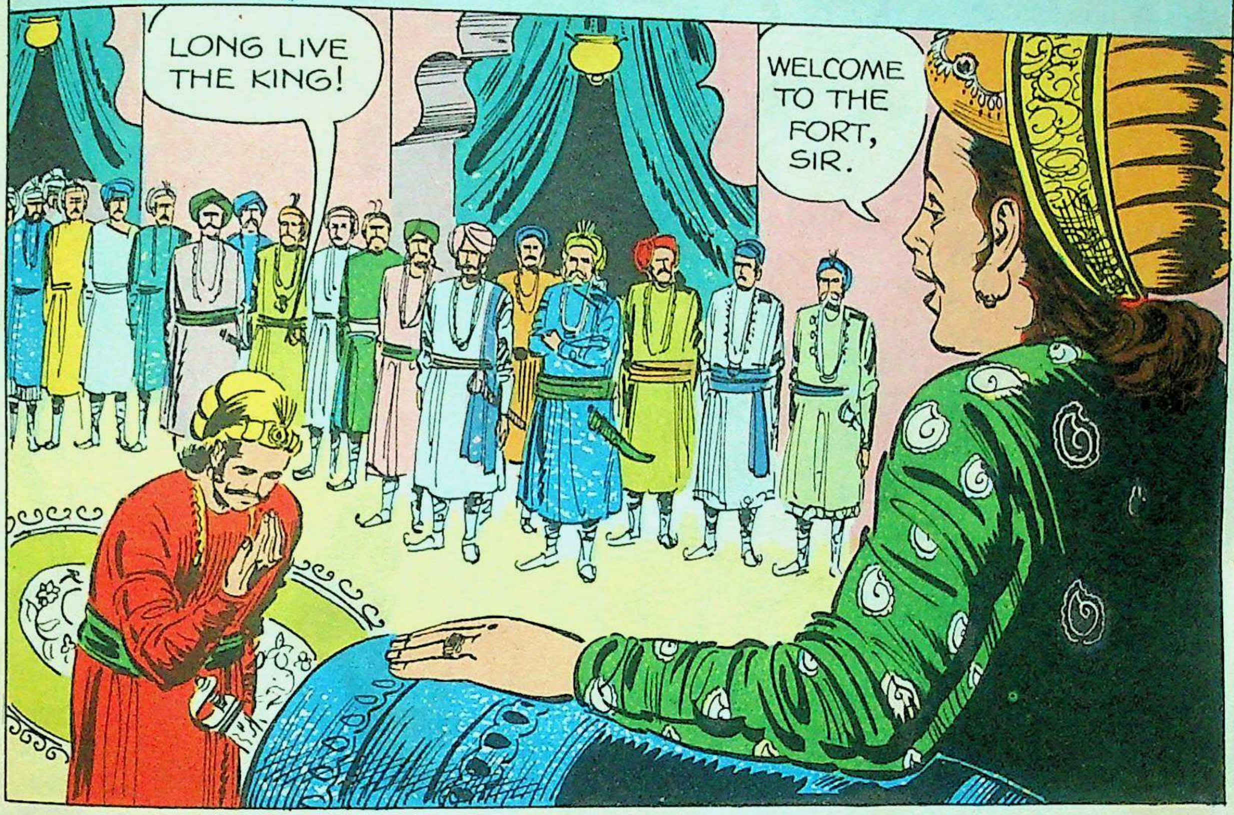

NOW THAT WE HAVE CAPTURED THIS FORT, I THINK IT'S SAFE FOR OUR KING TO COME OUT OF HIDING.
YES, WE WANT TO SEE HIM.


MUKUNDDAS, BRING OUR KING BACK TO US.
NO! WE MUST WAIT TILL DURGADAS COMES BACK.
NO. WE WANT TO SEE HIM NOW.

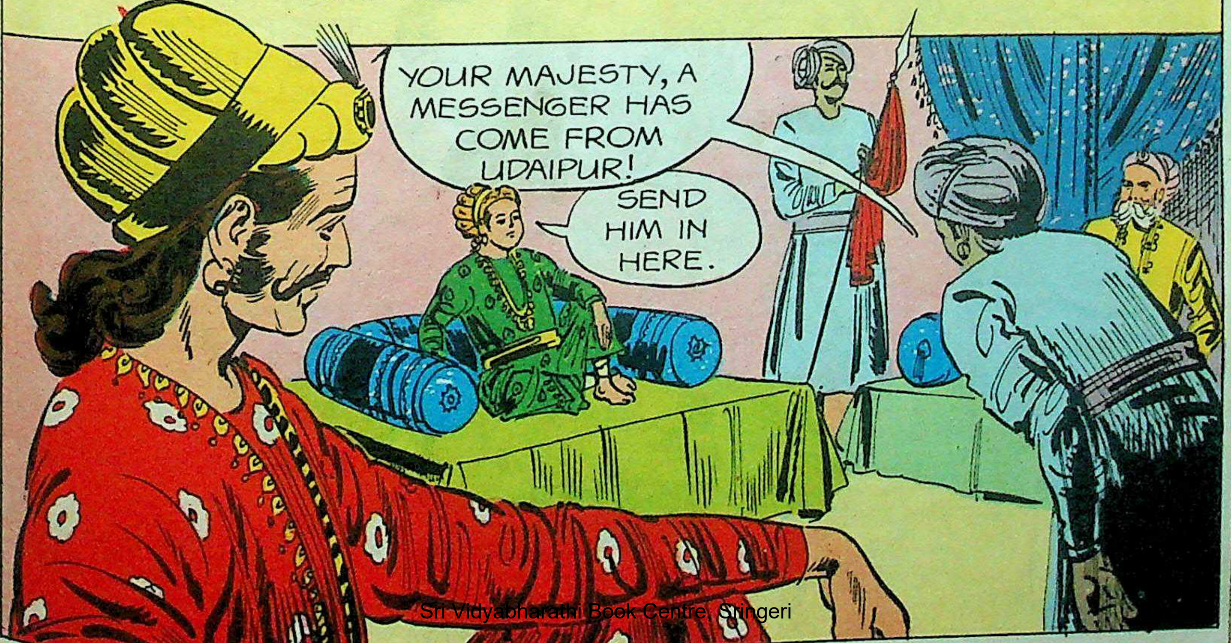
FORCED BY THE RAJPUTS, MUKUNDDAS BROUGHT AJEET SINGH OUT OF HIDING.

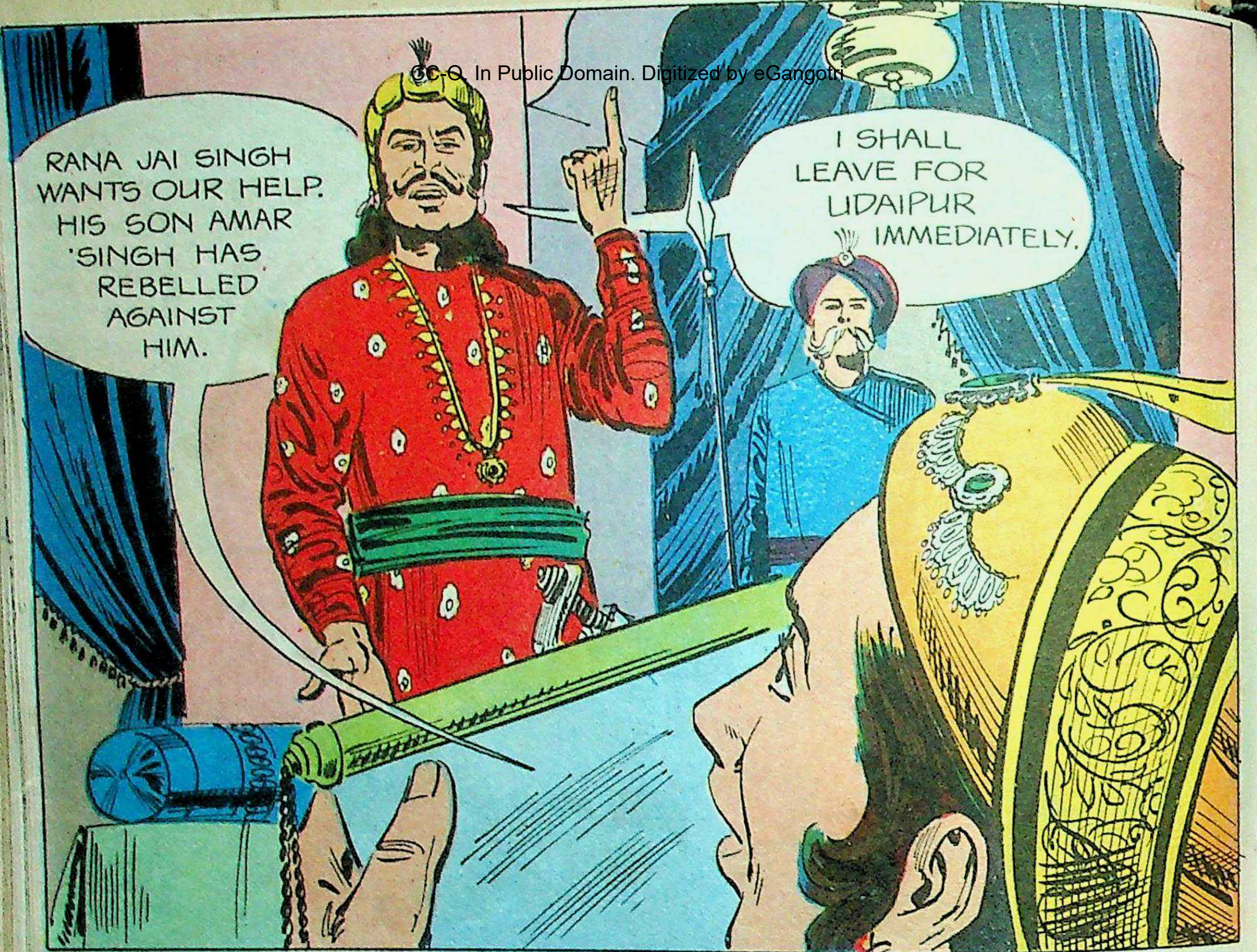

LONG LIVE THE KING.

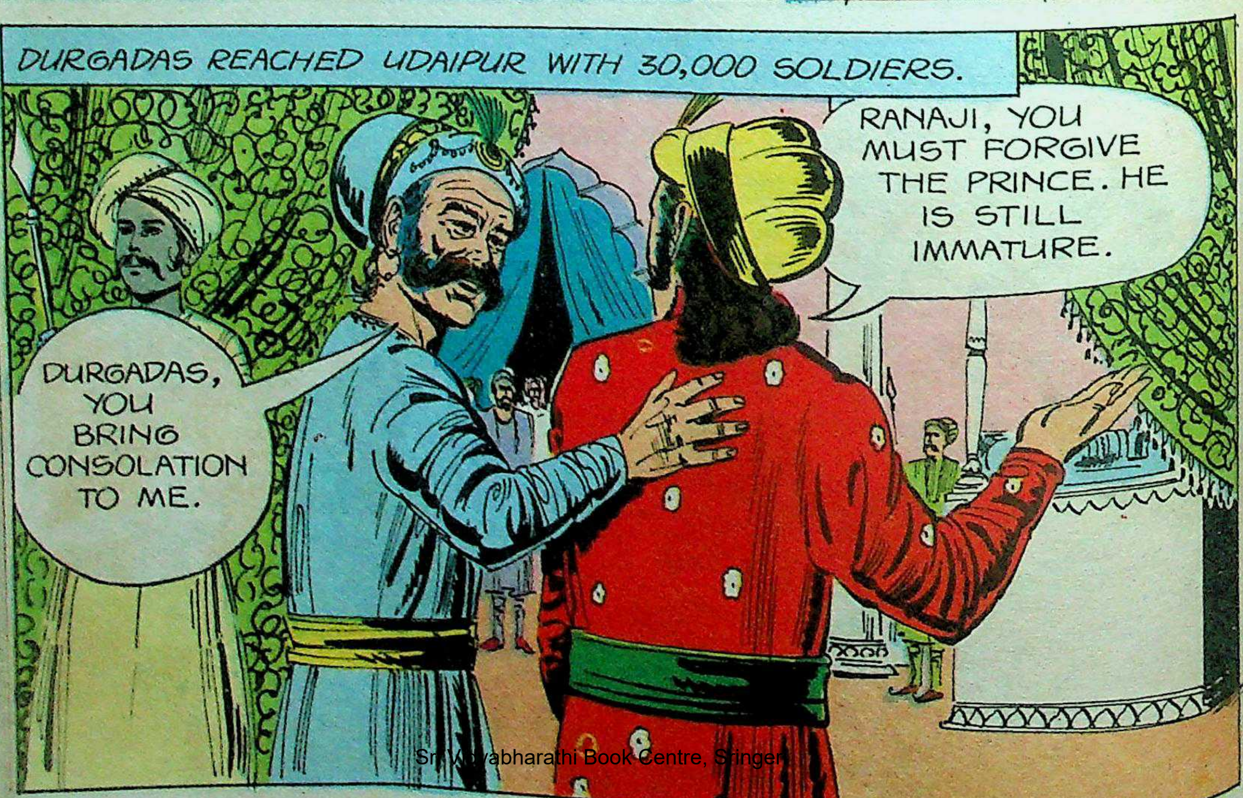
IN THE MEANTIME, DURGADAS WAS ON HIS WAY TO MARWAR. ATTACKING AND LOOTING THE MUGHALS, HE REACHED SIWANE AND WENT TO SEE MAHARAJ AJEET SINGH.


LONG LIVE THE KING!
WELCOME TO THE FORT, SIR.

IN 1692, PRINCE AMAR SINGH OF UDAIPUR REBELLED AGAINST HIS FATHER, RANA JAI SINGH, WHO SENT A MESSENGER TO AJEET SINGH FOR HELP.


YOUR MAJESTY, A MESSENGER HAS COME FROM UDAIPUR!
SEND HIM IN HERE.


RANA JAI SINGH WANTS OUR HELP. HIS SON AMAR SINGH HAS REBELLED AGAINST HIM.
I SHALL LEAVE FOR UDAIPUR IMMEDIATELY.


DURGADAS REACHED UDAIPUR WITH 30,000 SOLDIERS.
RANAJI, YOU MUST FORGIVE THE PRINCE. HE IS STILL IMMATURE.
DURGADAS, YOU BRING CONSOLATION TO ME.

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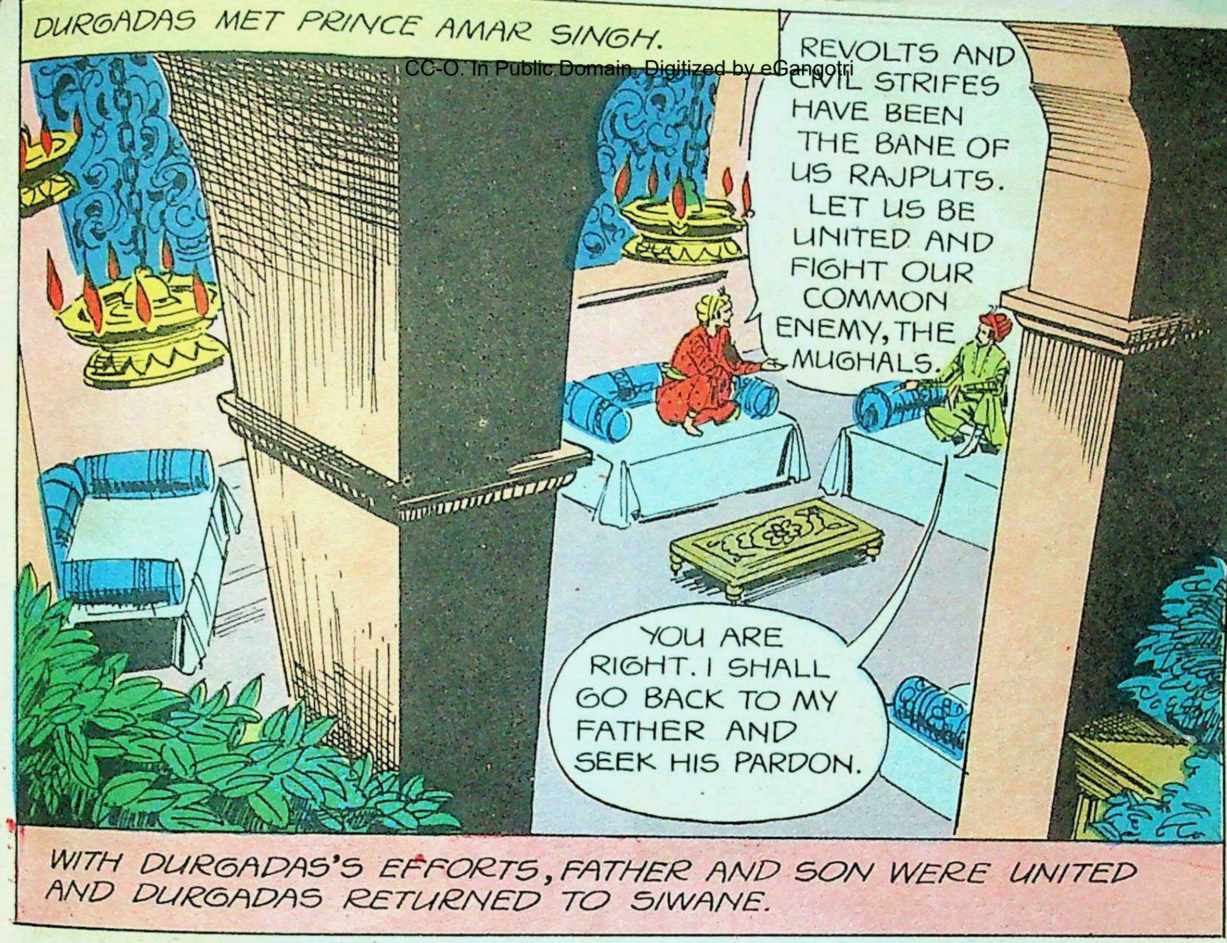
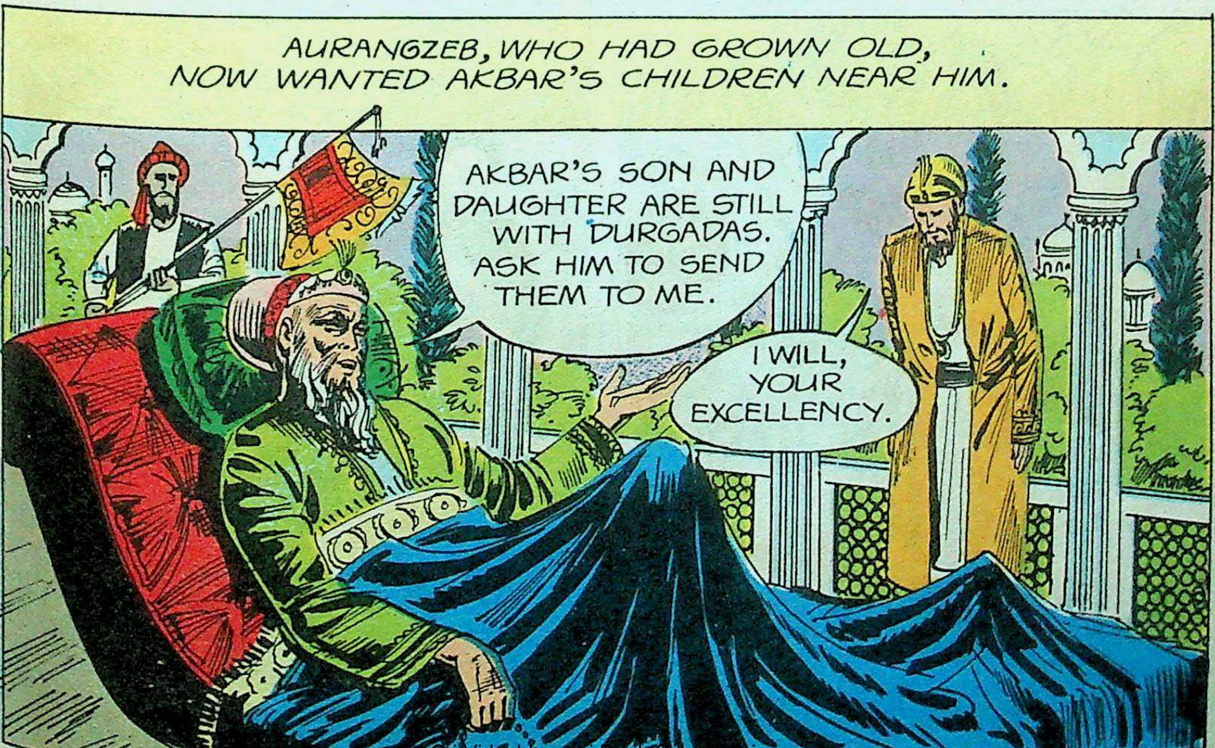
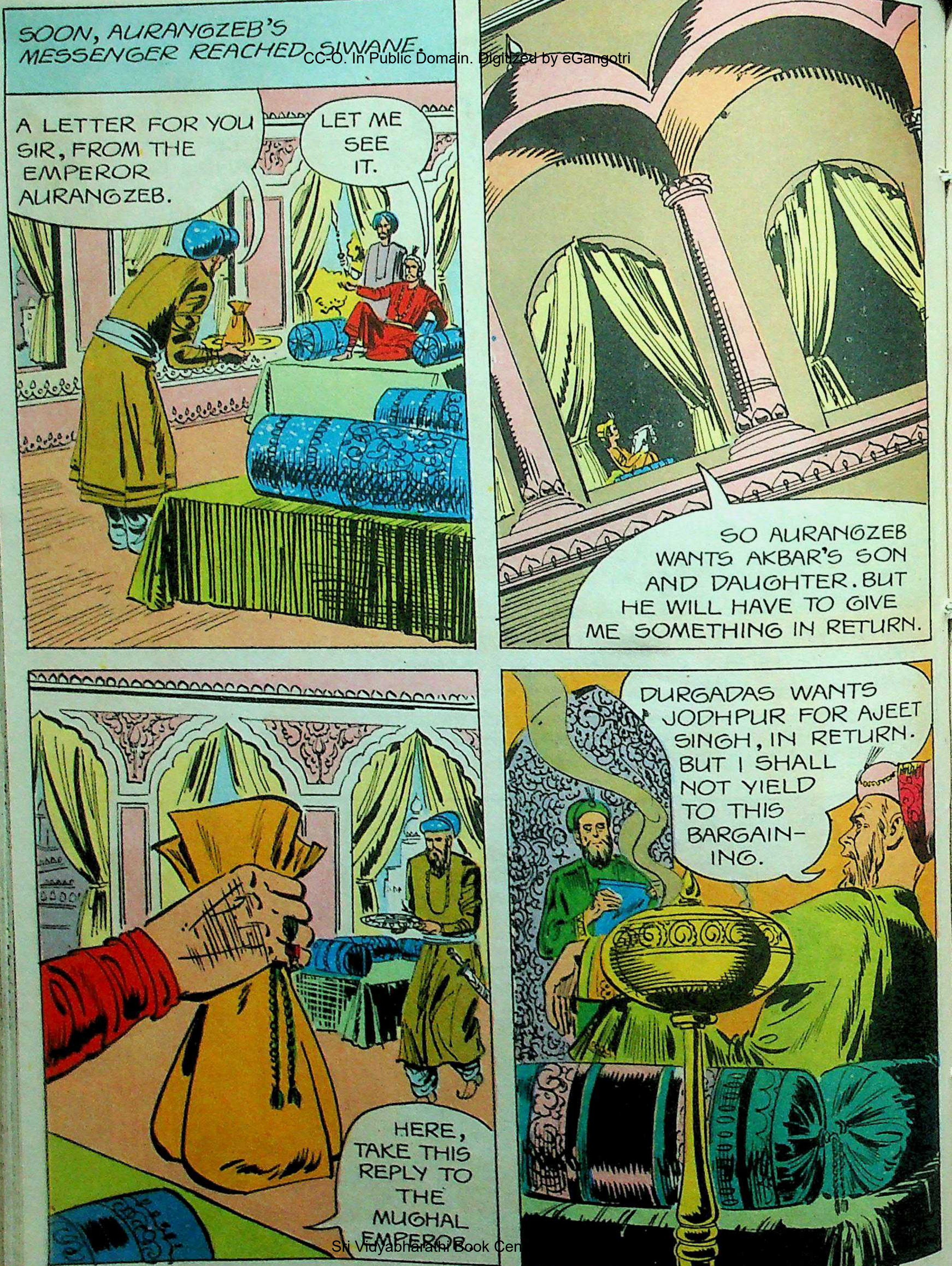
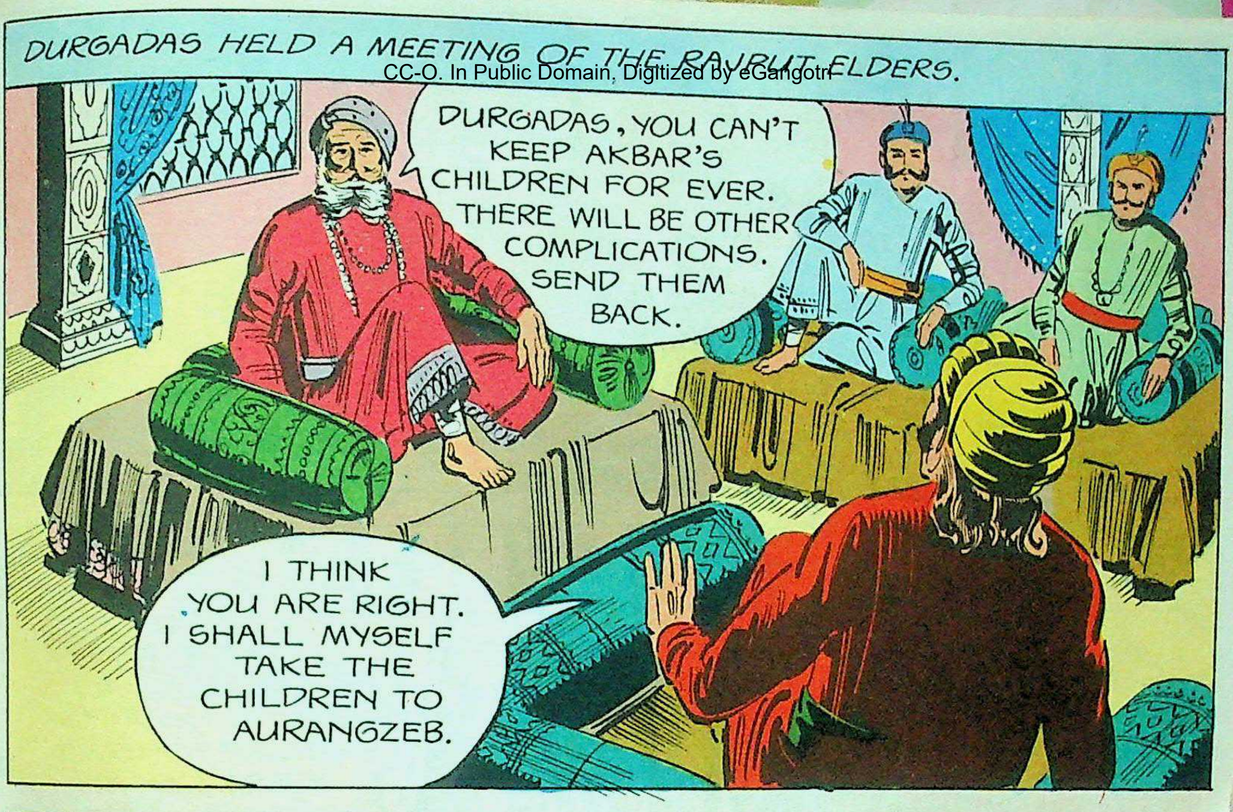
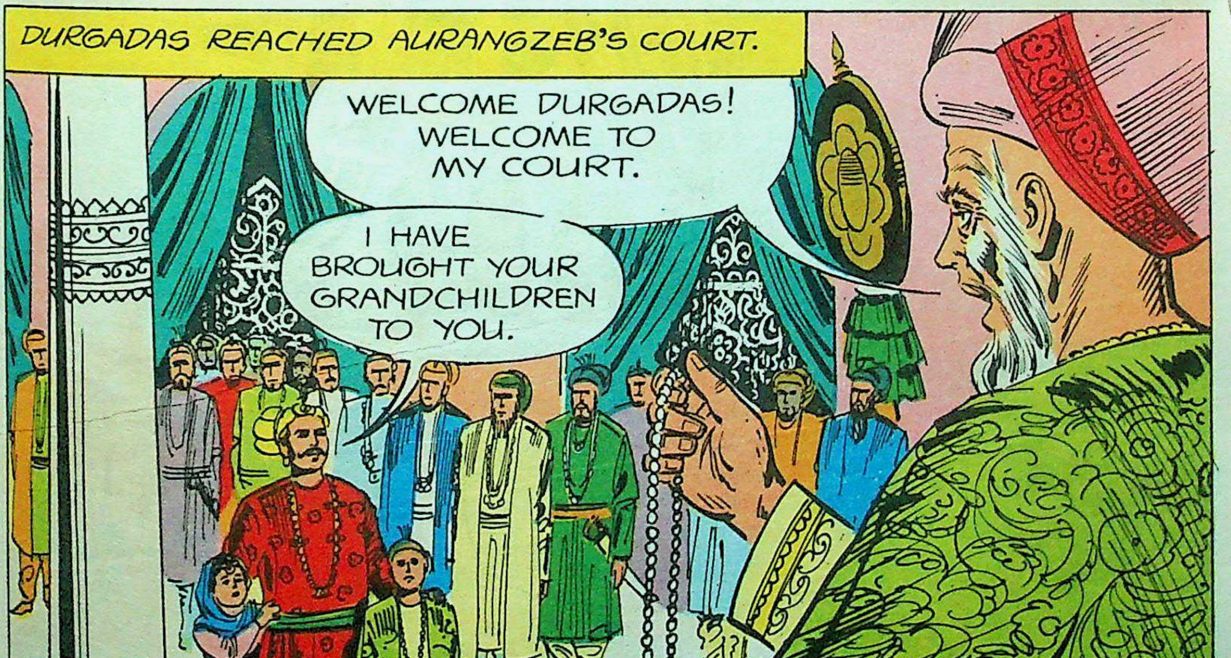
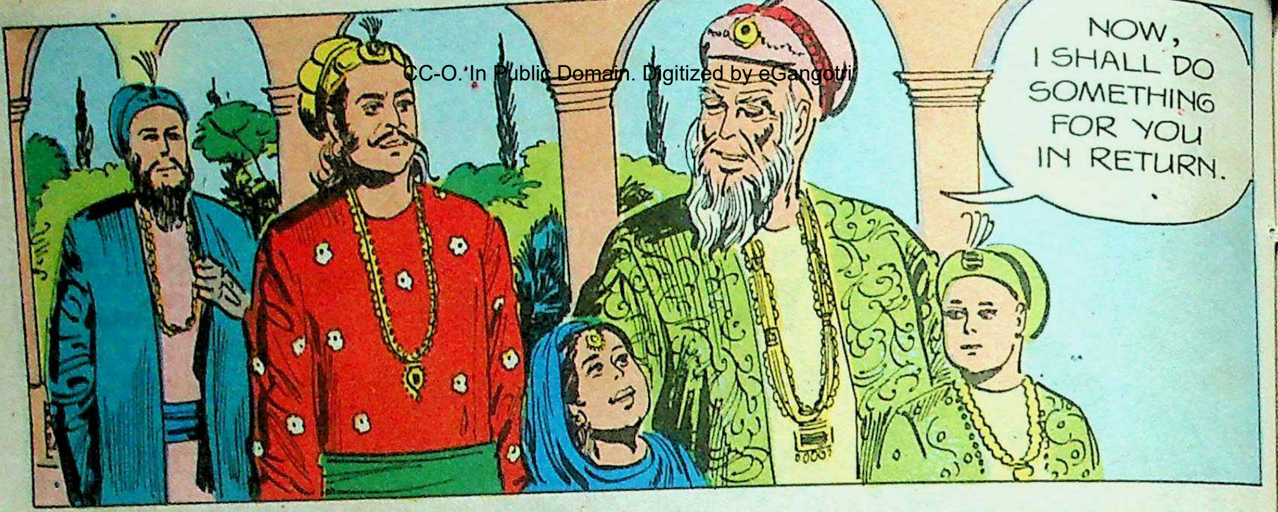

DURGADAS MET PRINCE AMAR SINGH.
REVOLTS AND CIVIL STRIFES HAVE BEEN THE BANE OF US RAJPUTS. LET US BE UNITED AND FIGHT OUR COMMON ENEMY, THE MUGHALS.
YOU ARE RIGHT. I SHALL GO BACK TO MY FATHER AND SEEK HIS PARDON.
WITH DURGADAS'S EFFORTS, FATHER AND SON WERE UNITED AND DURGADAS RETURNED TO SIWANE.

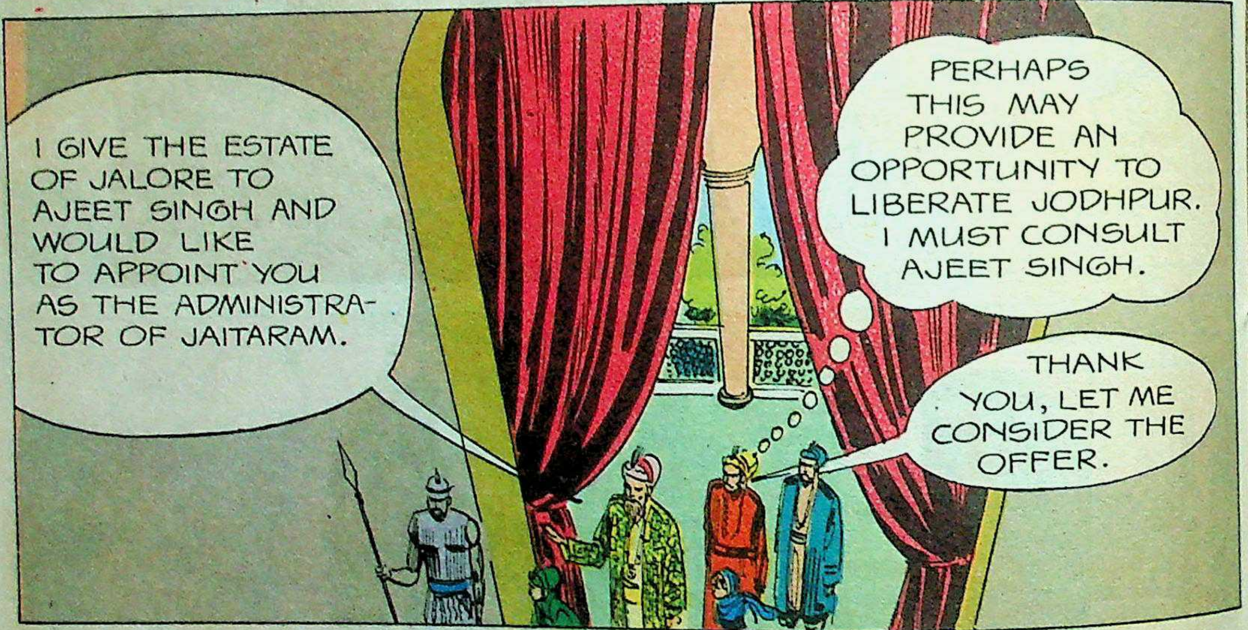

AURANGZEB, WHO HAD GROWN OLD, NOW WANTED AKBAR'S CHILDREN NEAR HIM.
AKBAR'S SON AND DAUGHTER ARE STILL WITH DURGADAS. ASK HIM TO SEND THEM TO ME.
I WILL, YOUR EXCELLENCY.

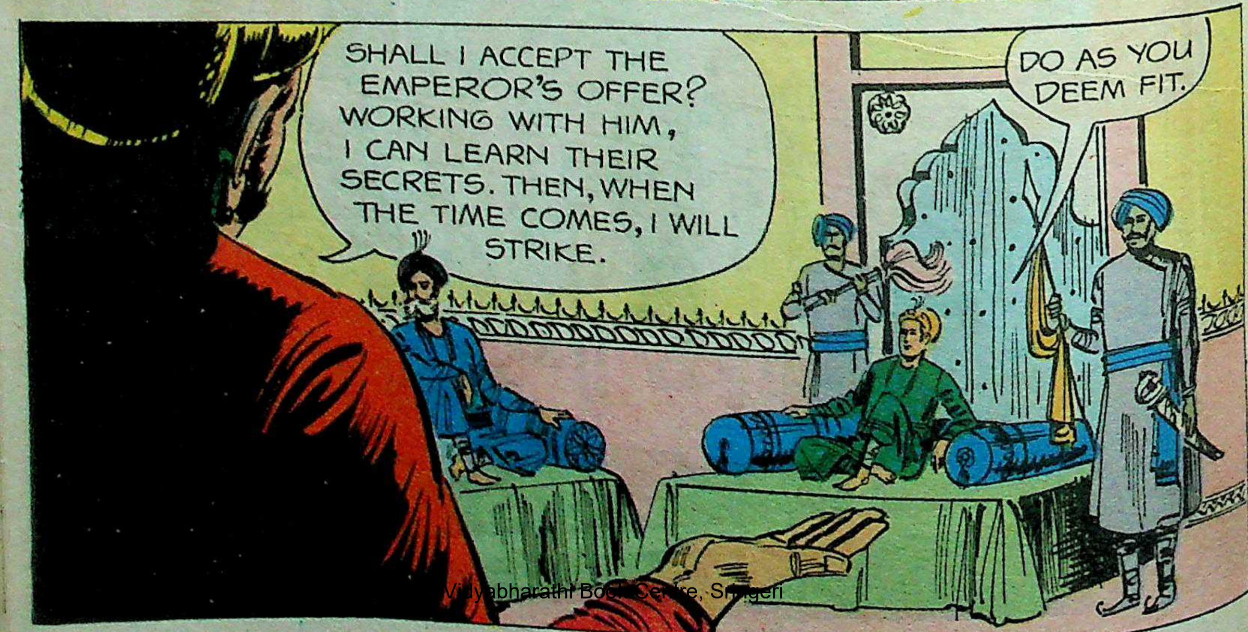

SOON, AURANGZEB'S MESSENGER REACHED SIWANE.
A LETTER FOR YOU SIR, FROM THE EMPEROR AURANGZEB.
LET ME SEE IT.
SO AURANGZEB WANTS AKBAR'S SON AND DAUGHTER. BUT HE WILL HAVE TO GIVE ME SOMETHING IN RETURN.
HERE, TAKE THIS REPLY TO THE MUGHAL EMPEROR.
DURGADAS WANTS JODHPUR FOR AJEET SINGH, IN RETURN. BUT I SHALL NOT YIELD TO THIS BARGAINING.


DURGADAS HELD A MEETING OF THE RAJPUT ELDERS.
DURGADAS, YOU CAN'T KEEP AKBAR'S CHILDREN FOR EVER. THERE WILL BE OTHER COMPLICATIONS. SEND THEM BACK.
I THINK YOU ARE RIGHT. I SHALL MYSELF TAKE THE CHILDREN TO AURANGZEB.

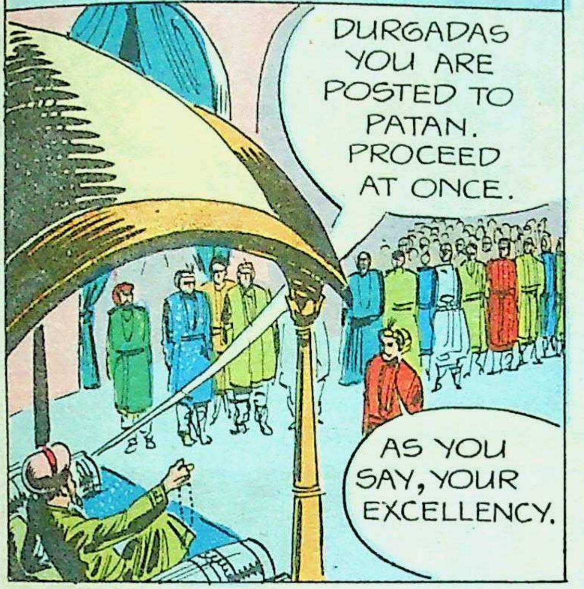

DURGADAS REACHED AURANGZEB'S COURT.
WELCOME DURGADAS! WELCOME TO MY COURT.
I HAVE BROUGHT YOUR GRANDCHILDREN TO YOU.


NOW, I SHALL DO SOMETHING FOR YOU IN RETURN.

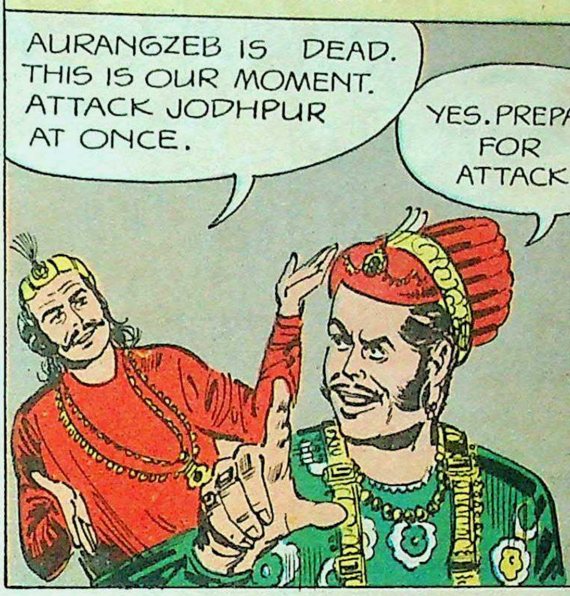

I GIVE THE ESTATE OF JALORE TO AJEET SINGH AND WOULD LIKE TO APPOINT YOU AS THE ADMINISTRATOR OF JAITARAM.
PERHAPS THIS MAY PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO LIBERATE JODHPUR. I MUST CONSULT AJEET SINGH.
THANK YOU, LET ME CONSIDER THE OFFER.


SHALL I ACCEPT THE EMPEROR'S OFFER? WORKING WITH HIM, I CAN LEARN THEIR SECRETS. THEN, WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WILL STRIKE.
DO AS YOU DEEM FIT.

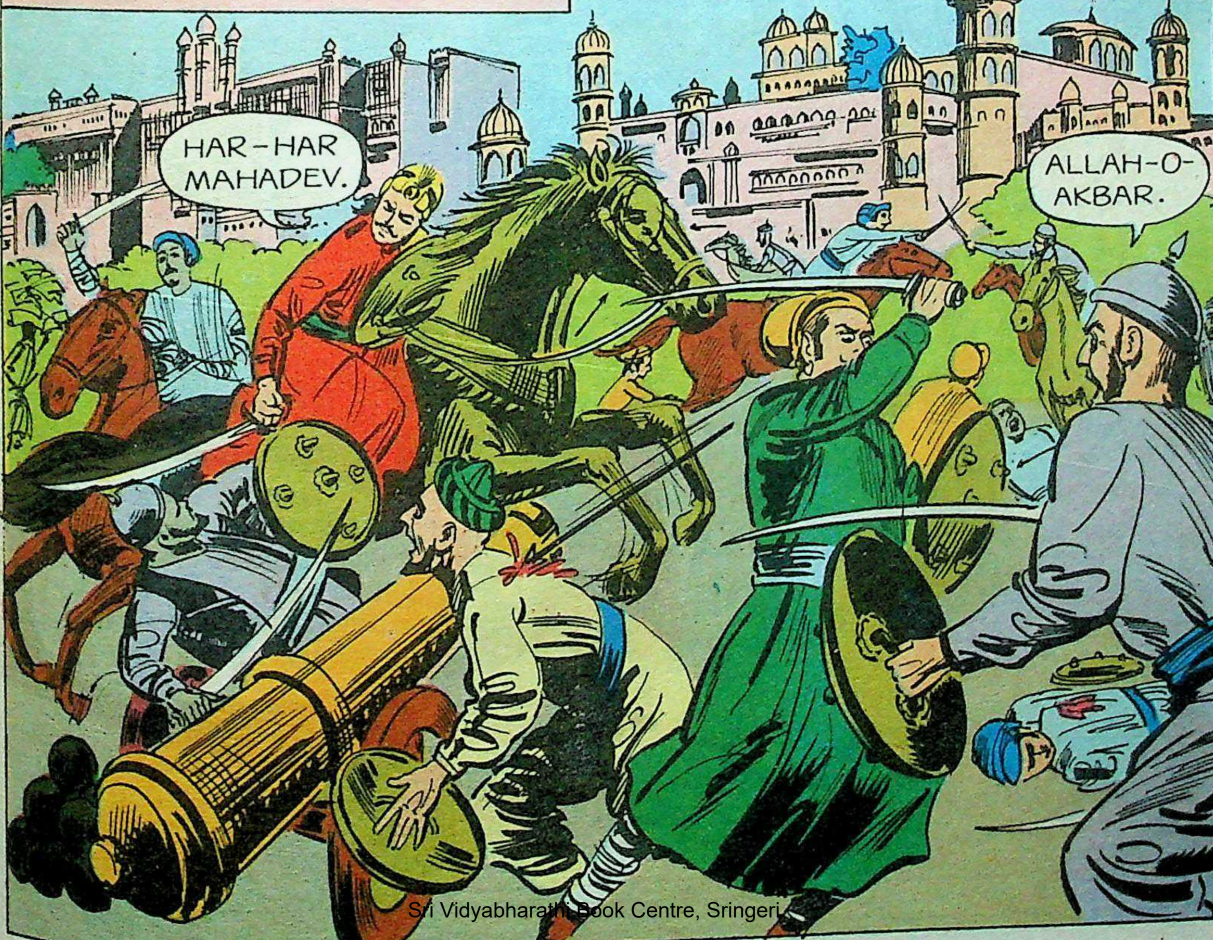
DURGADAS ACCEPTED AURANGZEB'S OFFER AND THEN, AFTER SOME TIME —


DURGADAS YOU ARE POSTED TO PATAN. PROCEED AT ONCE.
AS YOU SAY, YOUR EXCELLENCY.

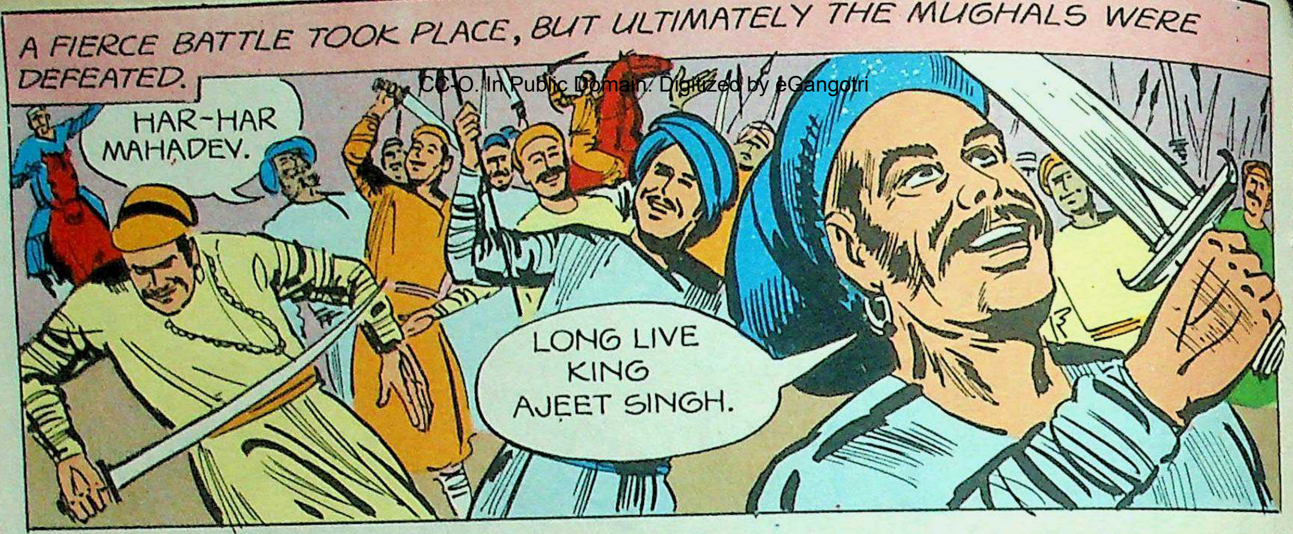
AURANGZEB DIED IN 1707. DURGADAS IMMEDIATELY WENT TO SEE AJEET SINGH.


AURANGZEB IS DEAD. THIS IS OUR MOMENT. ATTACK JODHPUR AT ONCE.
YES. PREPARE FOR ATTACK.

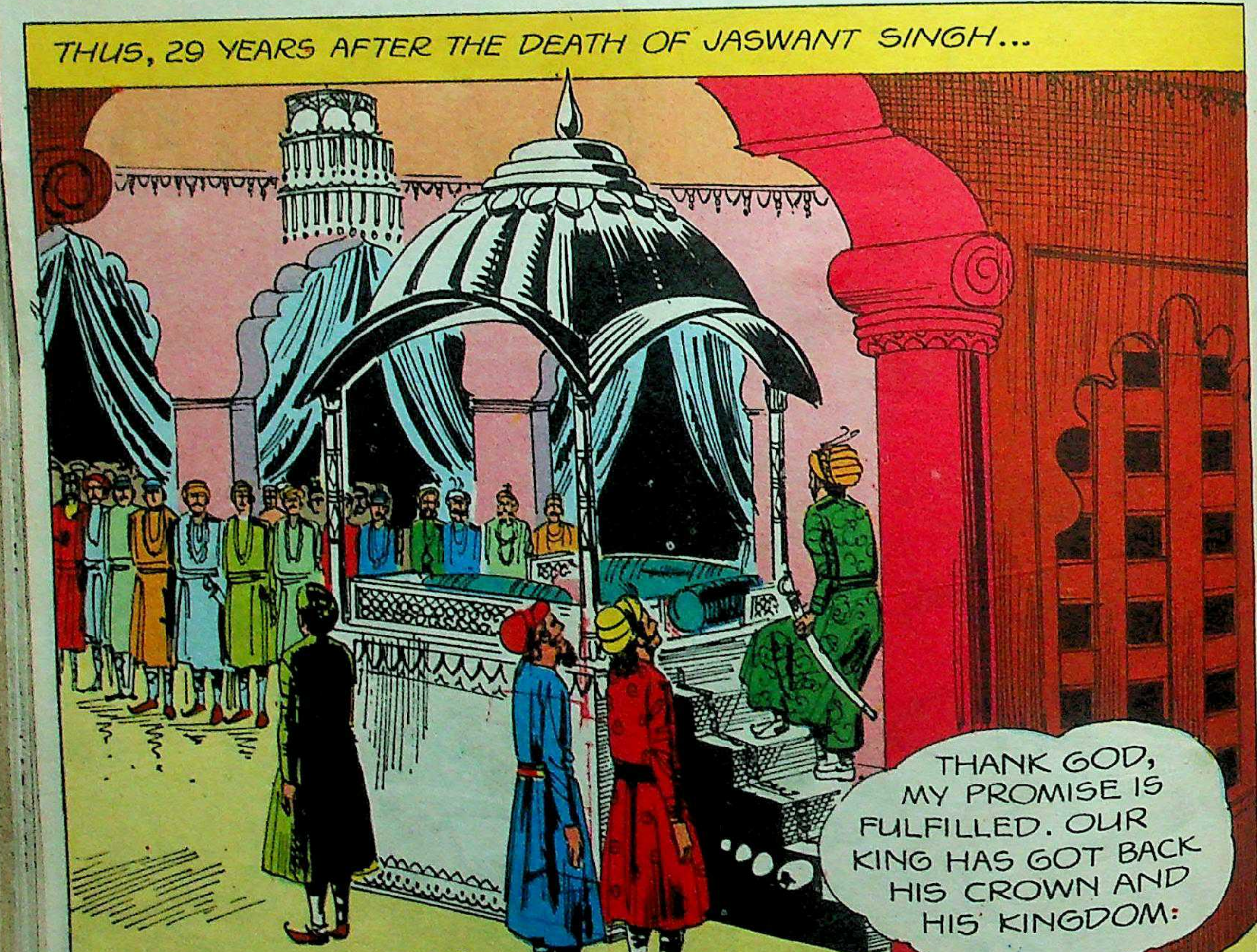
JODHPUR WAS ATTACKED.


HAR-HAR MAHADEV.
ALLAH-O-AKBAR.

A FIERCE BATTLE TOOK PLACE, BUT ULTIMATELY THE MUGHALS WERE DEFEATED.


HAR-HAR MAHADEV.
LONG LIVE KING AJEET SINGH.

THUS, 29 YEARS AFTER THE DEATH OF JASWANT SINGH...


THANK GOD, MY PROMISE IS FULFILLED. OUR KING HAS GOT BACK HIS CROWN AND HIS KINGDOM.
Halbe

THE VALOUR OF DURGADAS IS REMEMBERED EVEN TODAY. A MONUMENT CALLED "RATHOR KI CHATTANI" IS STILL THERE ON THE BANK OF THE RIVER KSHIPRA IN UJJAIN, WHERE DURGADAS DIED.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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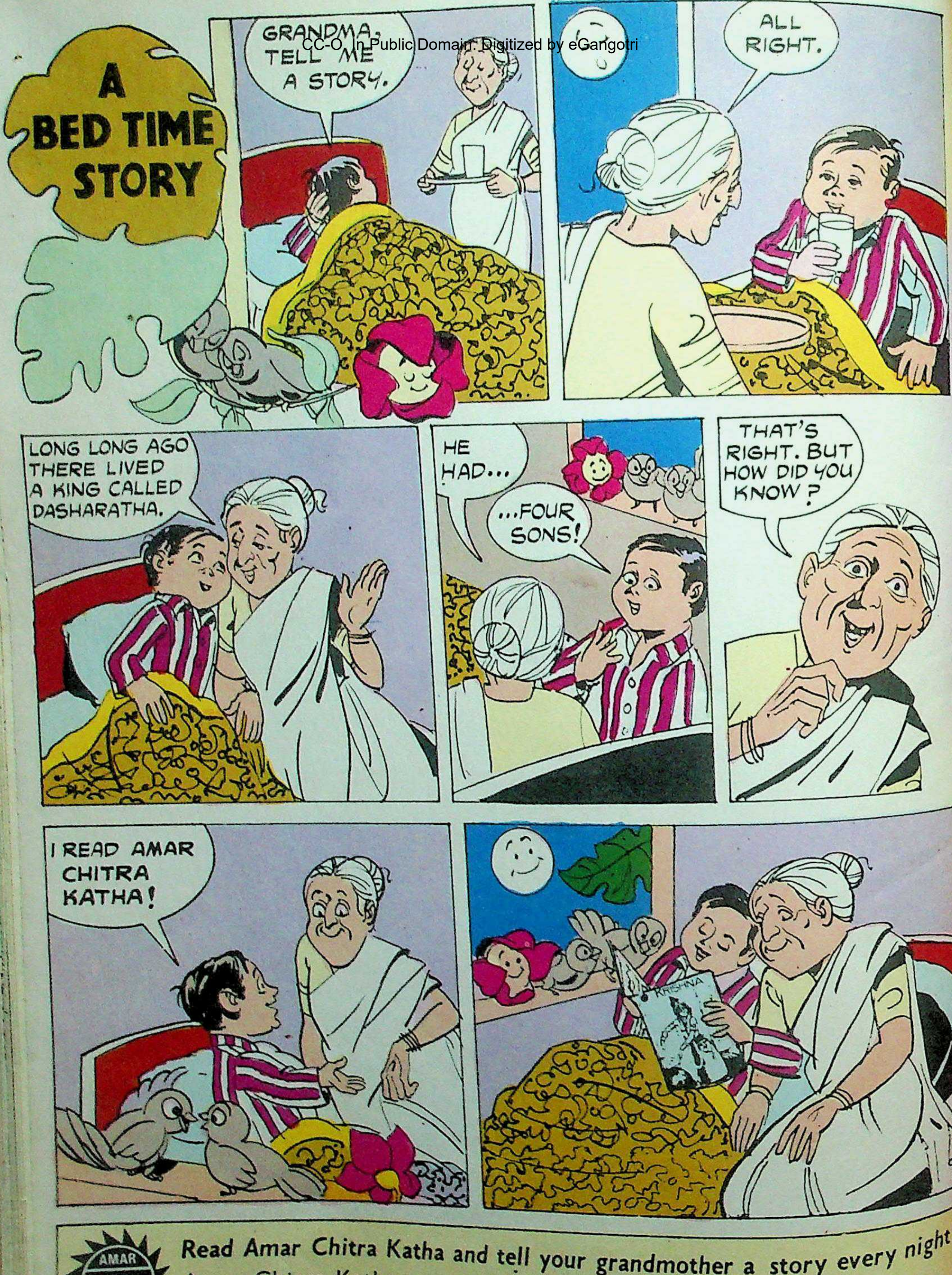
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HE HAD...
...FOUR SONS!
THAT'S RIGHT. BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW?
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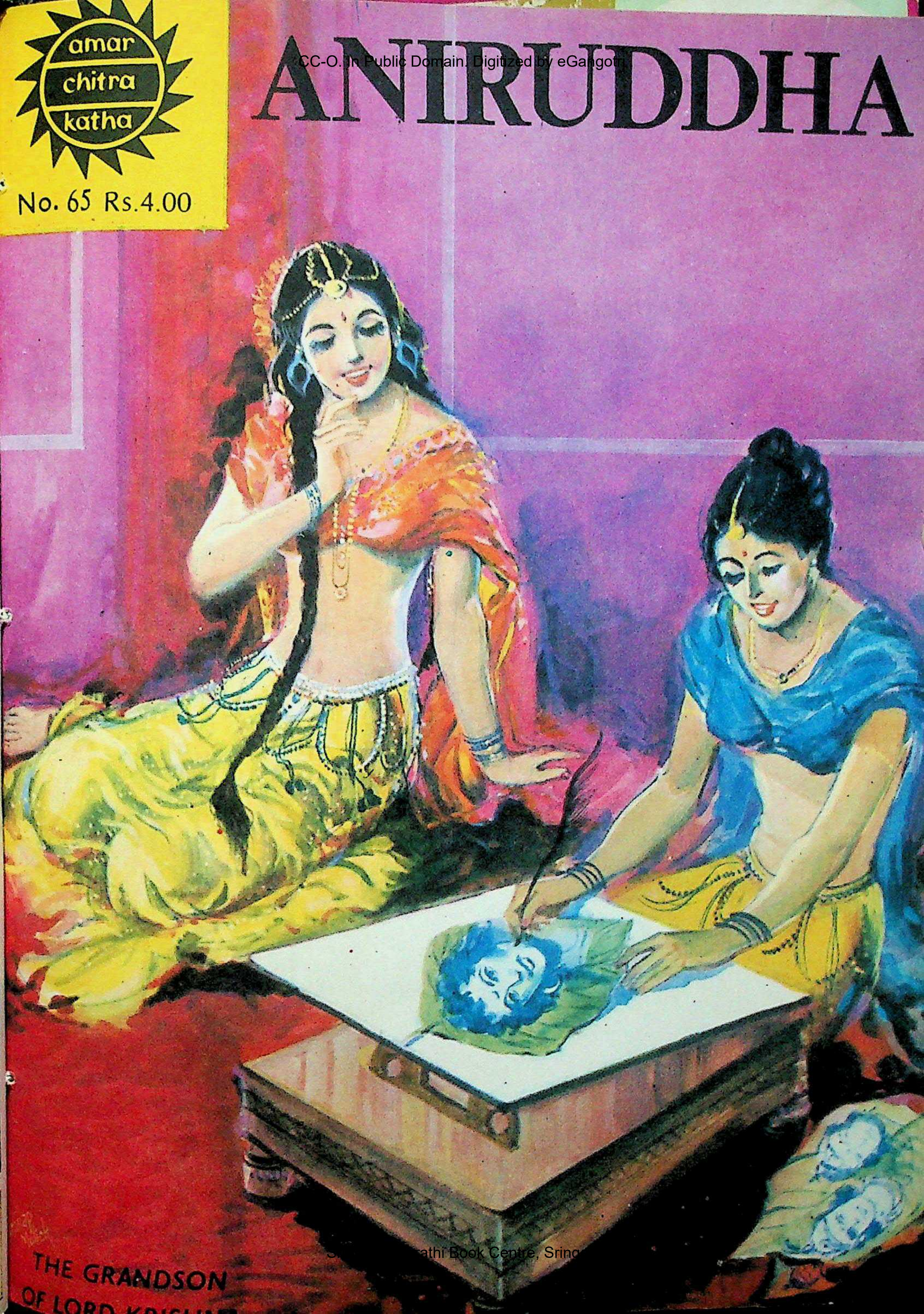

THE GRANDSON
OF LORD KRISHN

Aniruddha was the son of Pradyumna and grandson of Krishna. Usha, the daughter of an Asura named Bana, saw him in a dream and became anxious to know if there were such a person. Her favourite companion, Chitralekha, drew the portrait of many gods and men. At last when she drew the portrait of Aniruddha, Usha recognised him. Chitralekha set out to bring Aniruddha to Usha. Then followed a series of adventures and a great battle between the Yadavas and the Asuras.

The Puranas and the Brahmanas (Ancient Indian scriptures) record many conflicts between the Asuras and the Devas on the one hand and the Asuras and Aryan clans like the Yadavas and Pauravas, on the other.

According to the Taittiriya Brahmana, Prajapati (Brahma) created the Asuras with his breath (asu). The word, 'Asura', has long been used as a general name for the enemies of the gods. A different derivation has been found for the word, 'Asura'. The source is no longer 'asu' (breath) but the initial 'a' is taken as a negative prefix and a-sura signifies 'not a sura (god).

It is interesting to note that 'asuras' were not always annihilated but were often absorbed by marriages and alliances.

The story as narrated in this book is based on Bhagwat Purana.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA means good reading.
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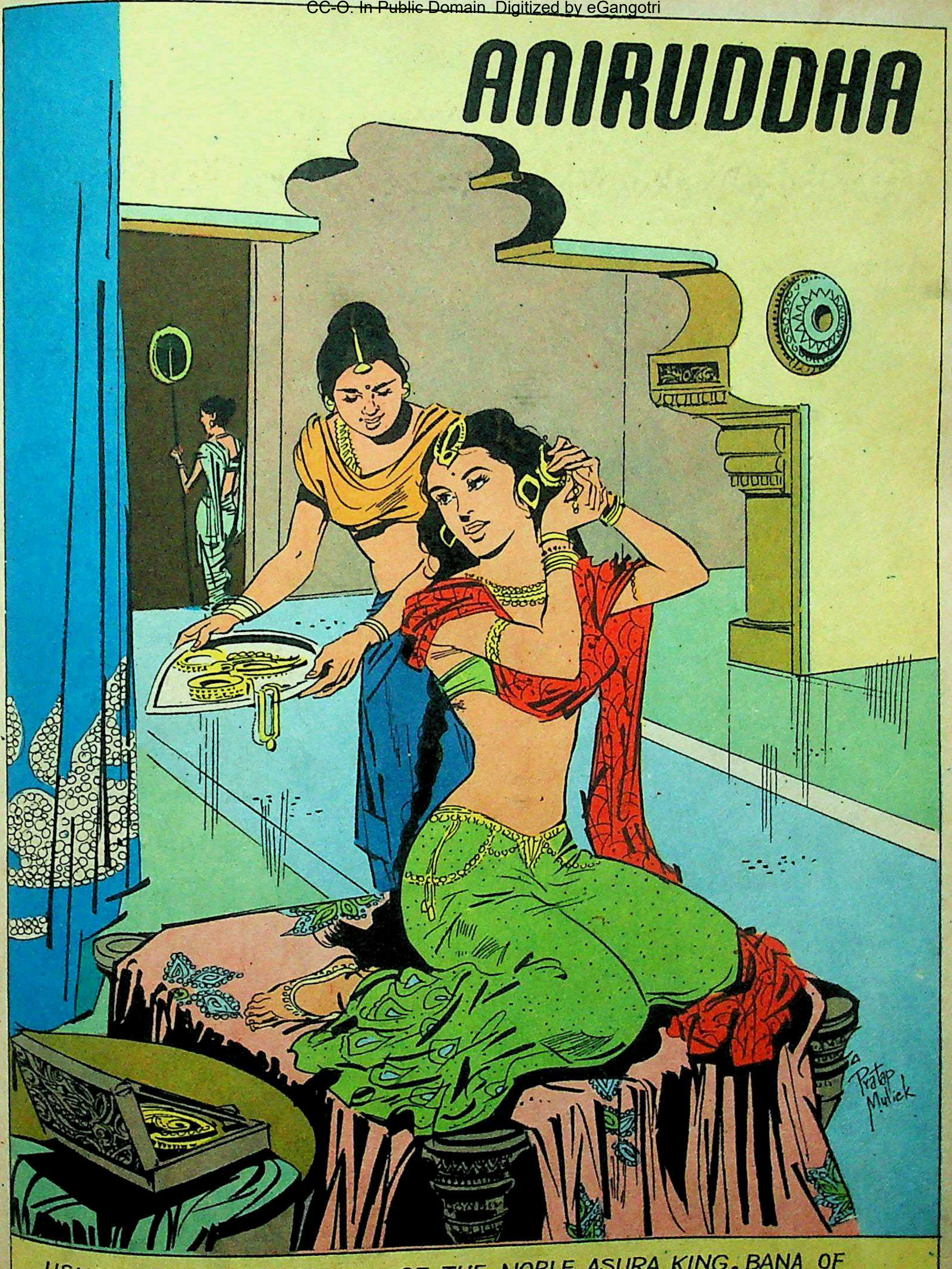
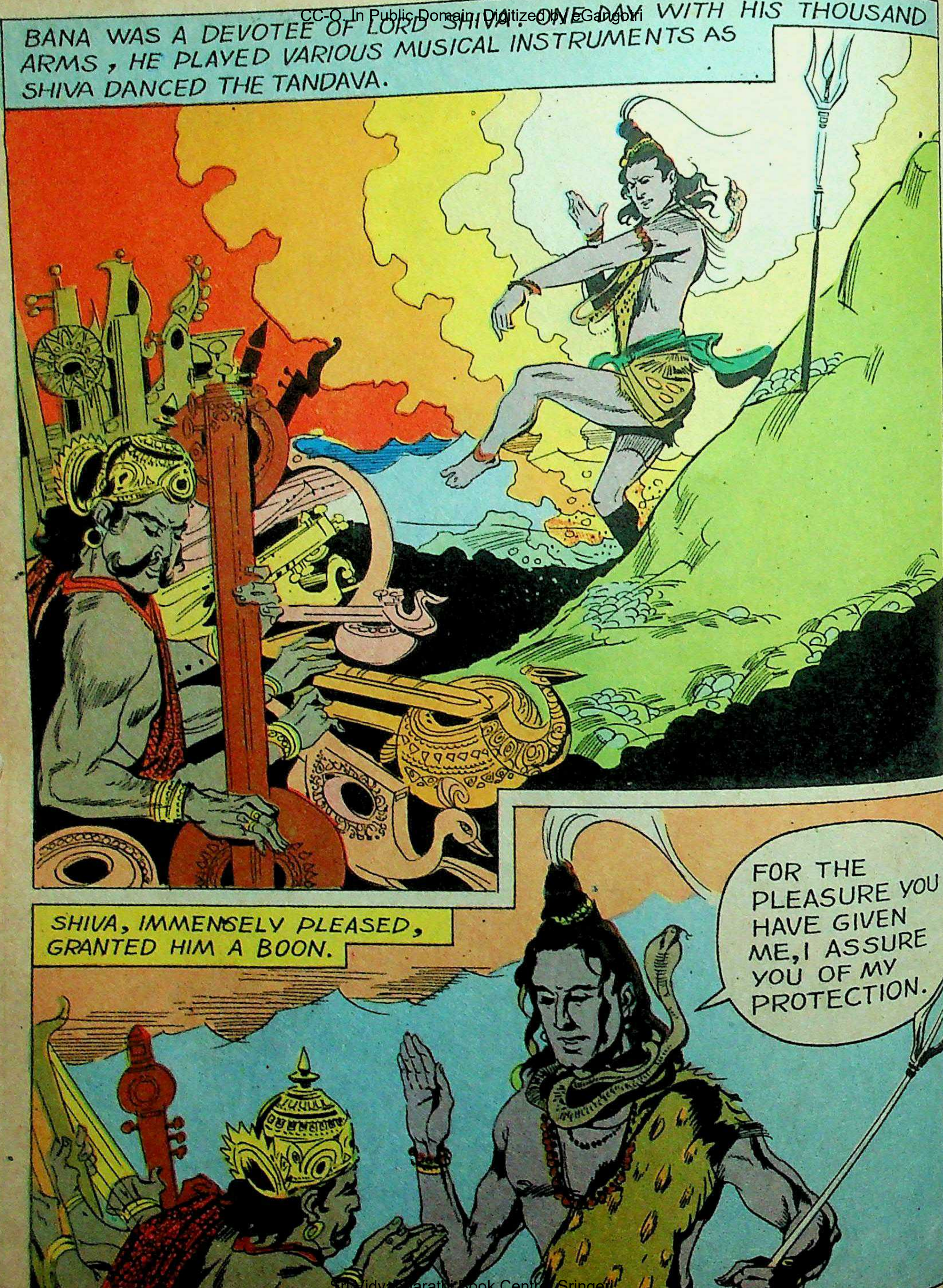
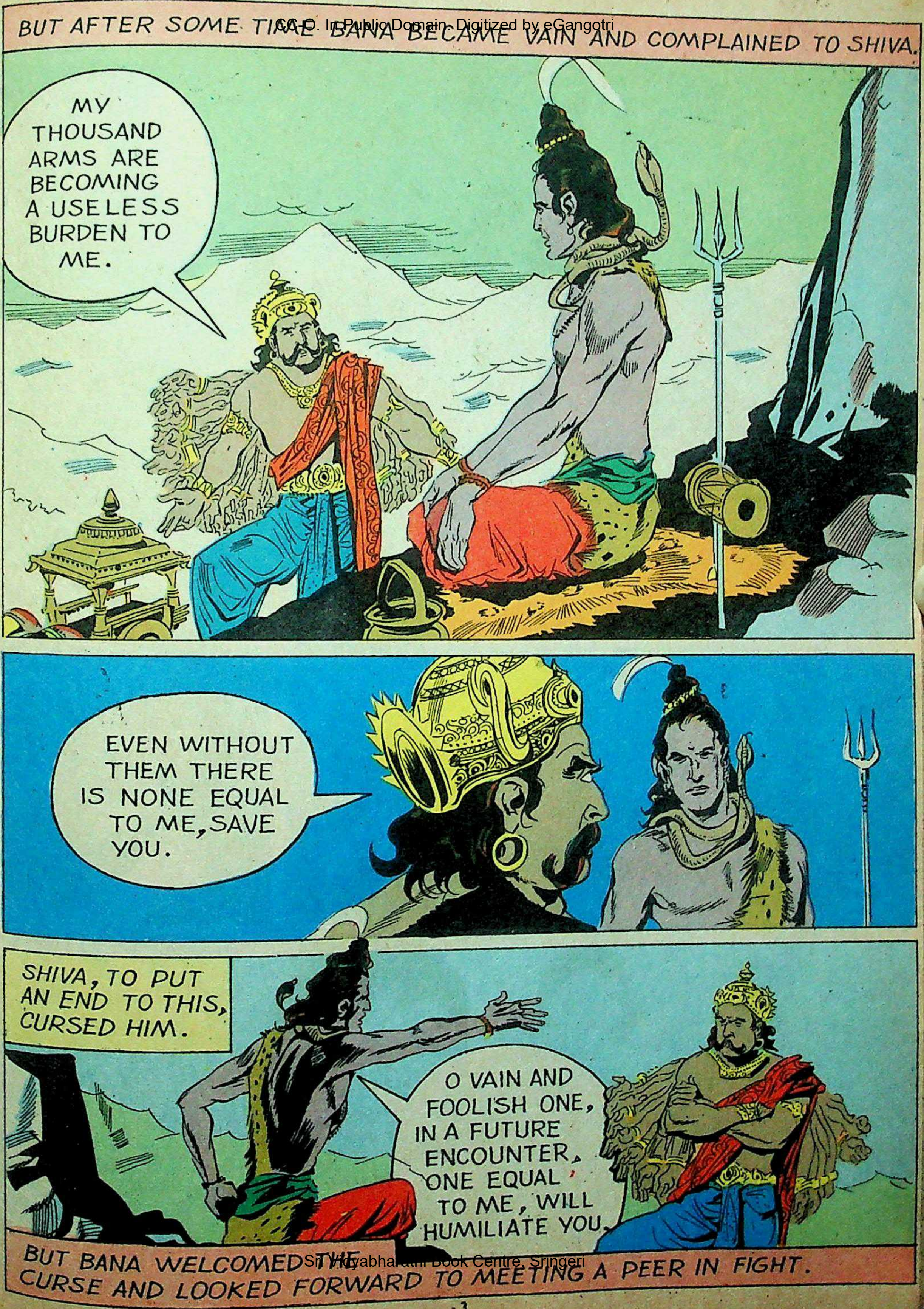
Sri Vidya Book Centre, Srinagar

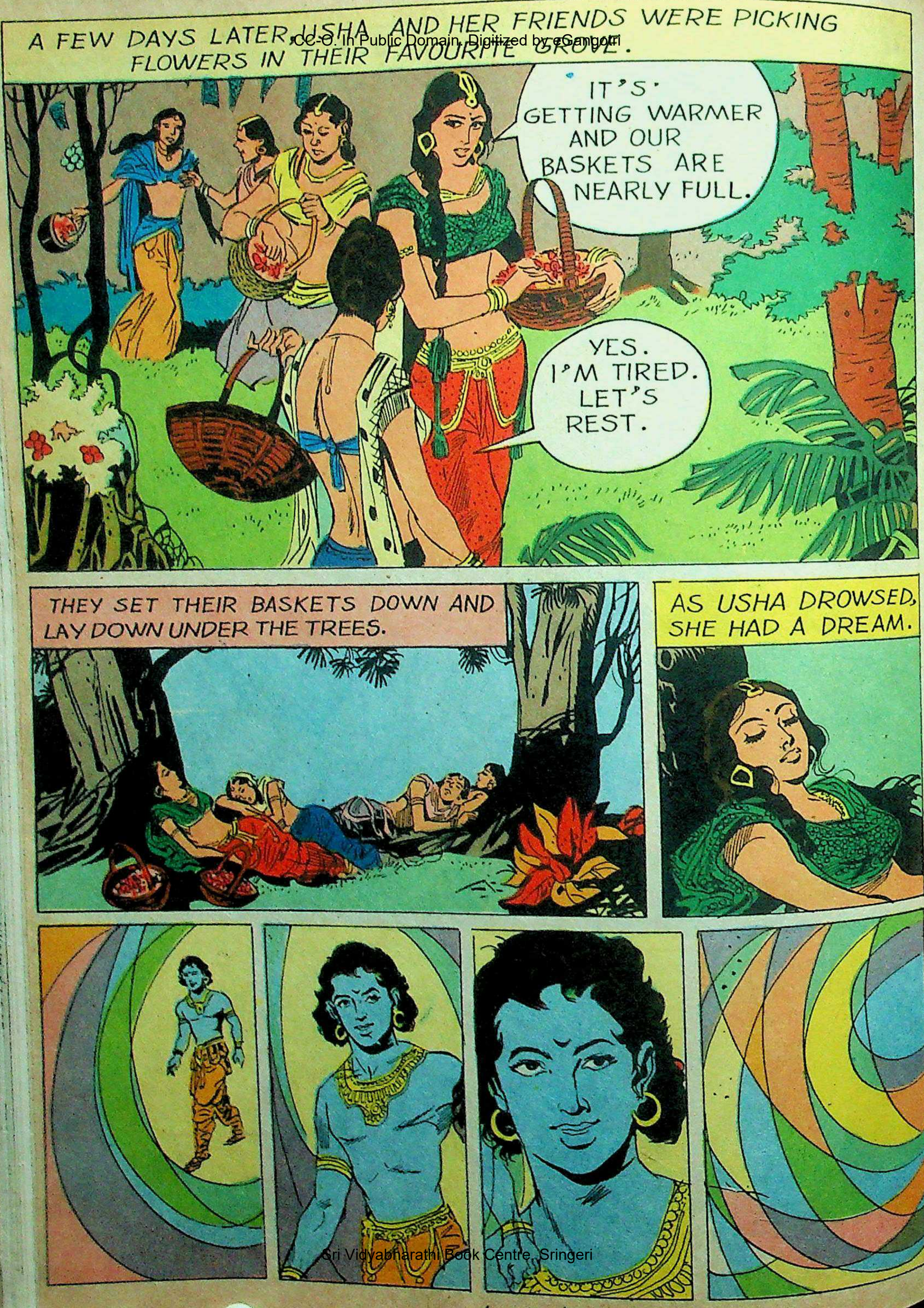
ANIRUDDHA

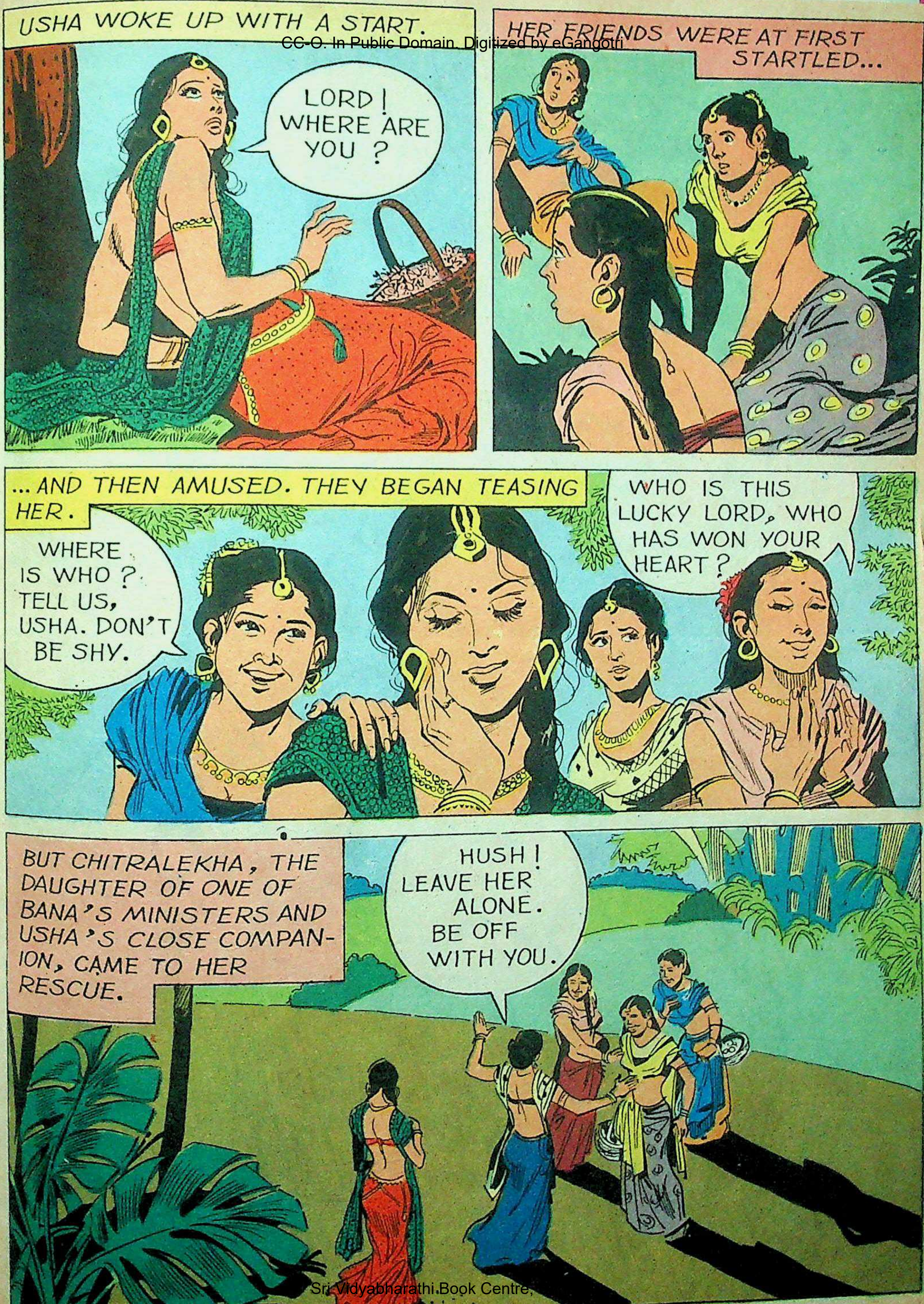

Pratap Mulick

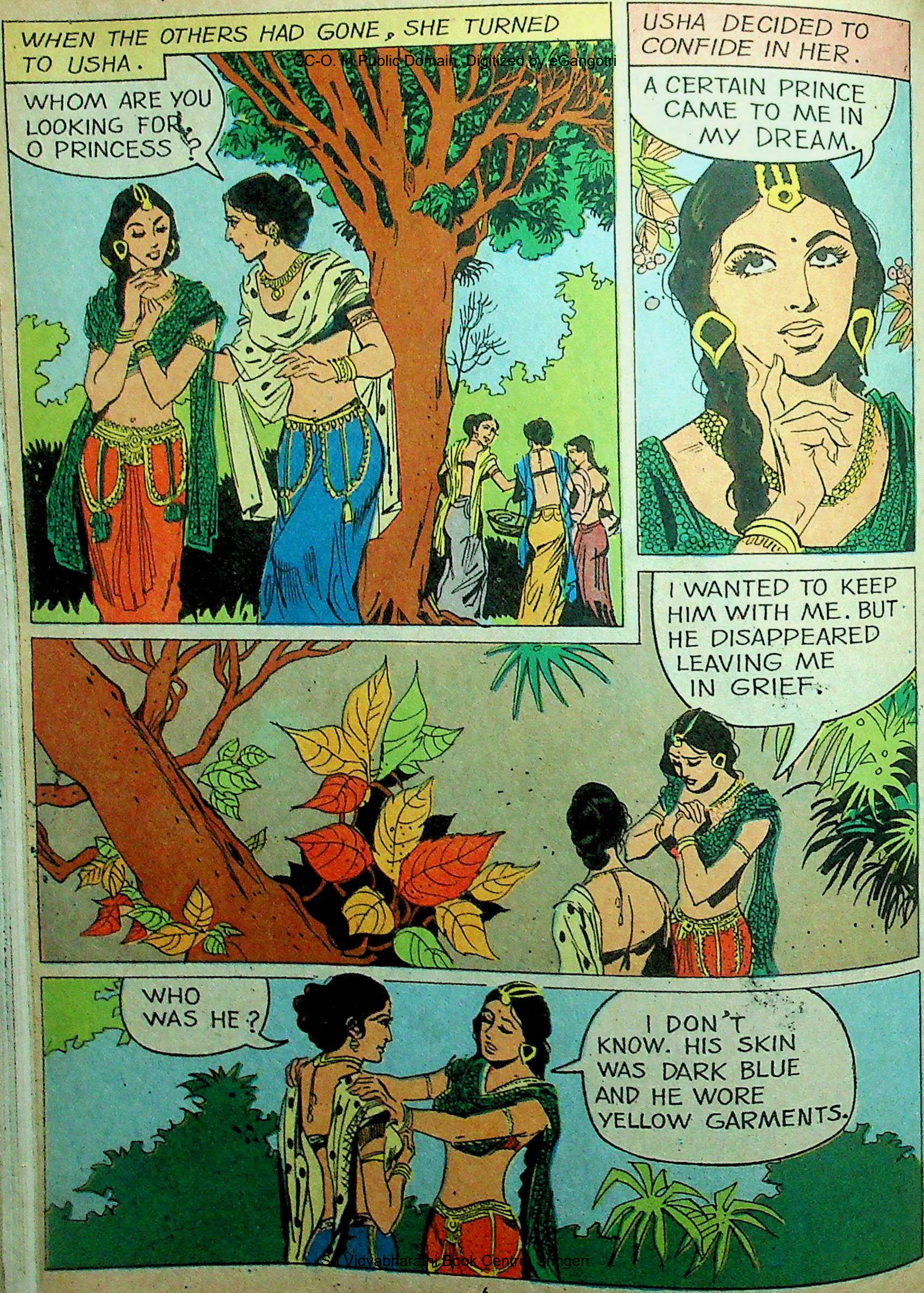
USHA WAS THE DAUGHTER OF THE NOBLE ASURA KING, BANA OF THE THOUSAND ARMS.

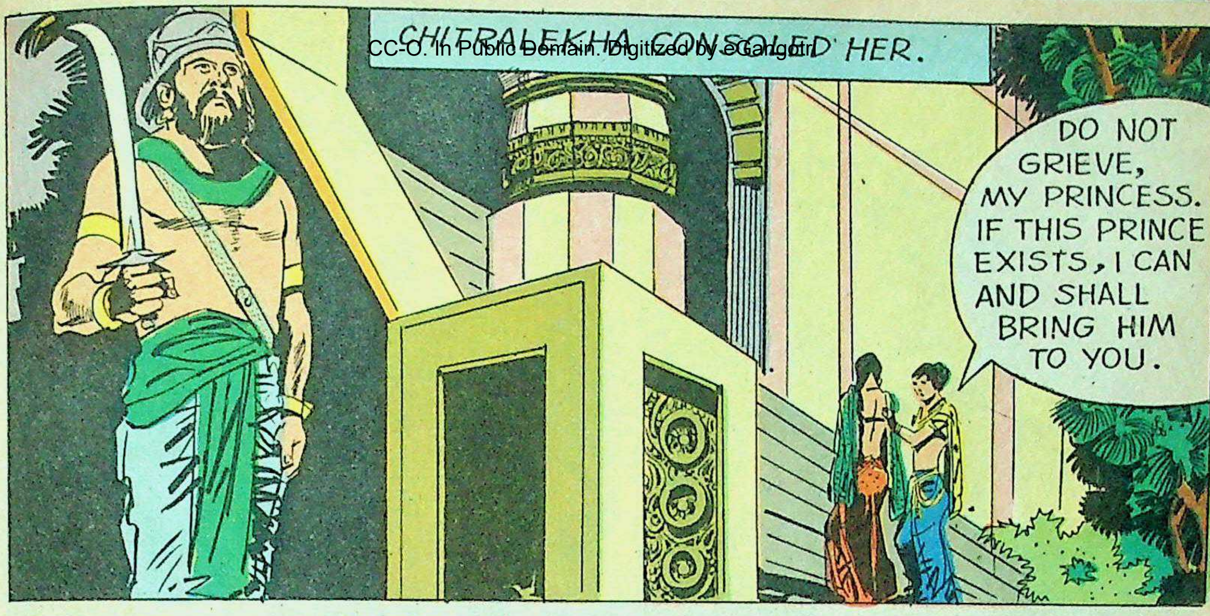

BANA WAS A DEVOTEE OF LORD SHIVA. ONE DAY WITH HIS THOUSAND ARMS, HE PLAYED VARIOUS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS AS SHIVA DANCED THE TANDAVA.
SHIVA, IMMENSELY PLEASED, GRANTED HIM A BOON.
FOR THE PLEASURE YOU HAVE GIVEN ME, I ASSURE YOU OF MY PROTECTION.

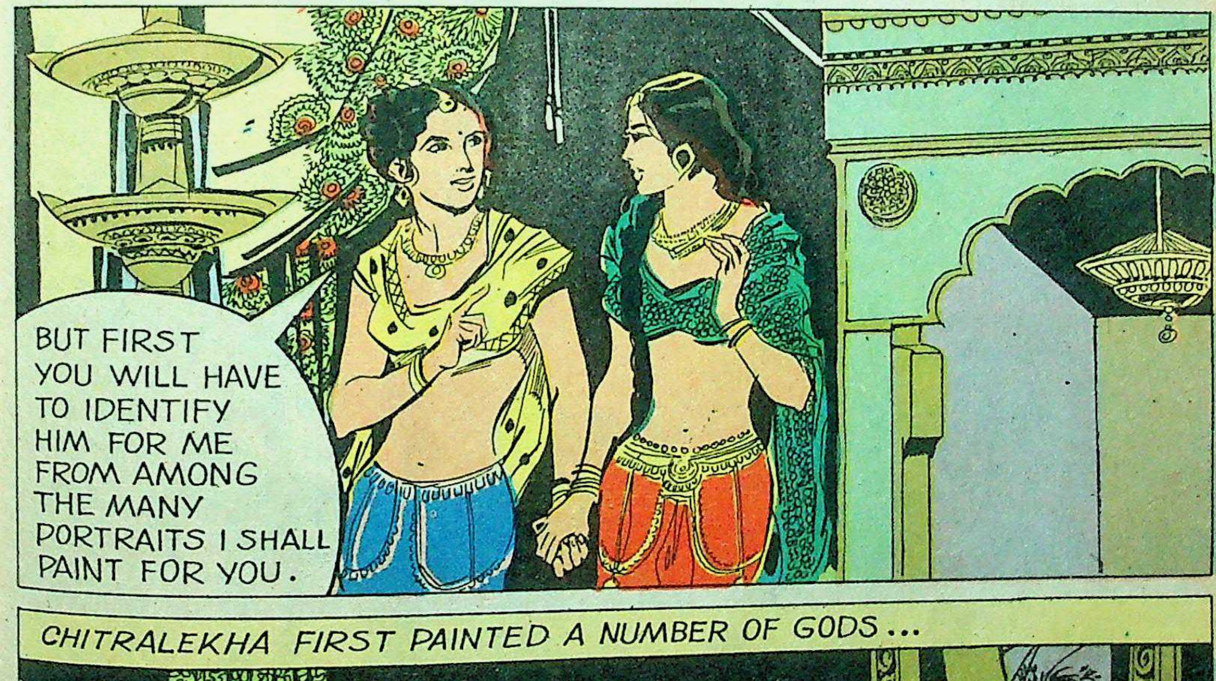

BUT AFTER SOME TIME BANA BECAME VAIN AND COMPLAINED TO SHIVA.
MY THOUSAND ARMS ARE BECOMING A USELESS BURDEN TO ME.
EVEN WITHOUT THEM THERE IS NONE EQUAL TO ME, SAVE YOU.
SHIVA, TO PUT AN END TO THIS, CURSED HIM.
O VAIN AND FOOLISH ONE, IN A FUTURE ENCOUNTER, ONE EQUAL TO ME, WILL HUMILIATE YOU.
BUT BANA WELCOMED THE CURSE AND LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING A PEER IN FIGHT.

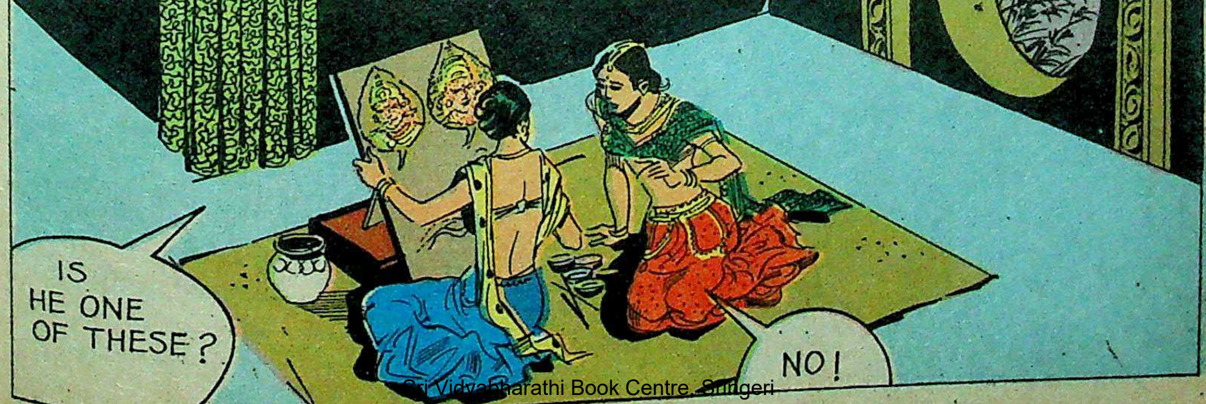

A FEW DAYS LATER, USHA AND HER FRIENDS WERE PICKING FLOWERS IN THEIR FAVOURITE GROVE.
IT'S GETTING WARMER AND OUR BASKETS ARE NEARLY FULL.
YES. I'M TIRED. LET'S REST.
THEY SET THEIR BASKETS DOWN AND LAY DOWN UNDER THE TREES.
AS USHA DROWSED, SHE HAD A DREAM.

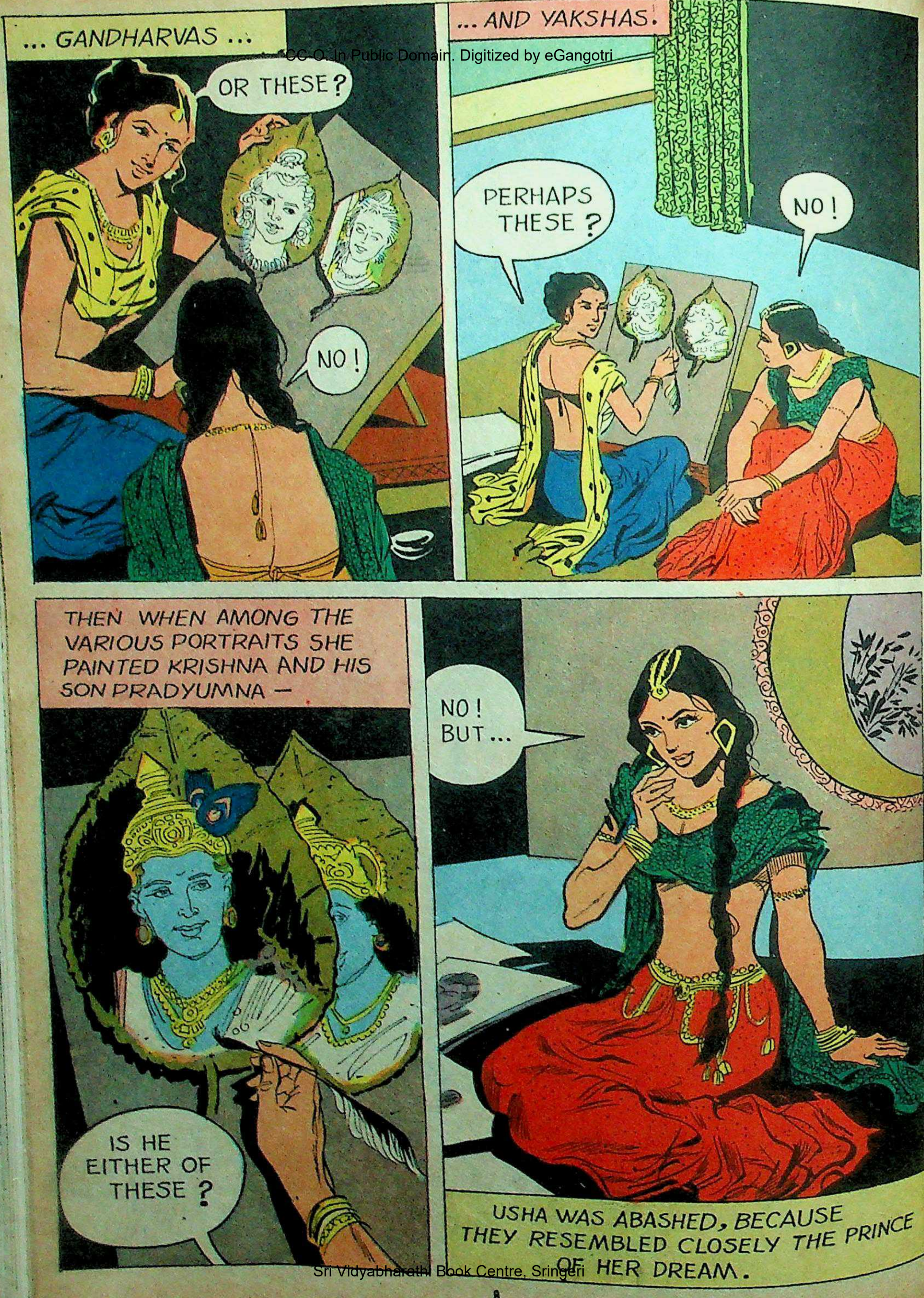

USHA WOKE UP WITH A START.
LORD! WHERE ARE YOU ?
HER FRIENDS WERE AT FIRST STARTLED...
...AND THEN AMUSED. THEY BEGAN TEASING HER.
WHERE IS WHO ? TELL US, USHA. DON'T BE SHY.
WHO IS THIS LUCKY LORD, WHO HAS WON YOUR HEART ?
BUT CHITRALEKHA, THE DAUGHTER OF ONE OF BANA'S MINISTERS AND USHA'S CLOSE COMPANION, CAME TO HER RESCUE.
HUSH ! LEAVE HER ALONE. BE OFF WITH YOU.

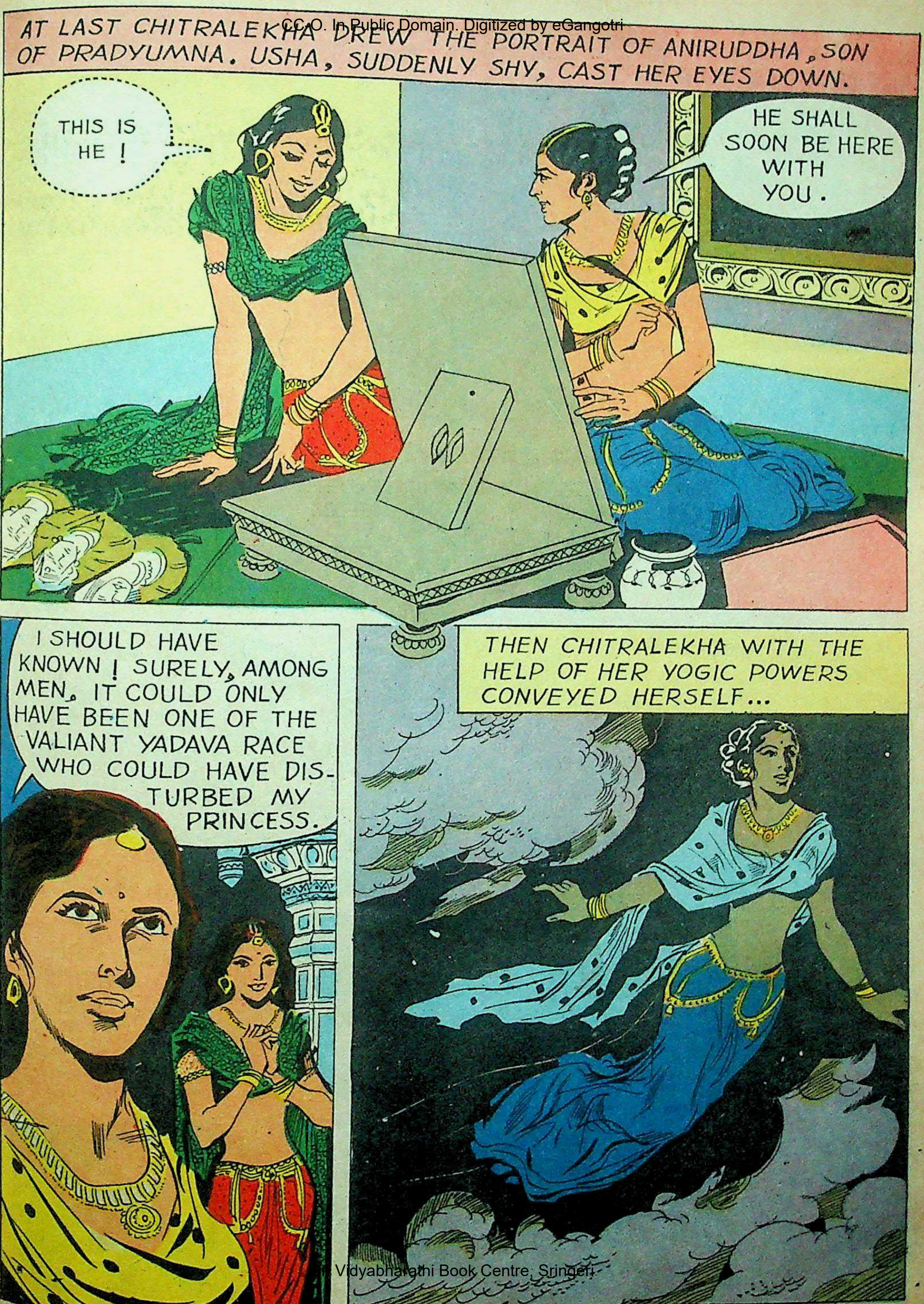

WHEN THE OTHERS HAD GONE, SHE TURNED TO USHA.
WHOM ARE YOU LOOKING FOR, O PRINCESS?
USHA DECIDED TO CONFIDE IN HER.
A CERTAIN PRINCE CAME TO ME IN MY DREAM.
I WANTED TO KEEP HIM WITH ME. BUT HE DISAPPEARED LEAVING ME IN GRIEF.
WHO WAS HE?
I DON'T KNOW. HIS SKIN WAS DARK BLUE AND HE WORE YELLOW GARMENTS.

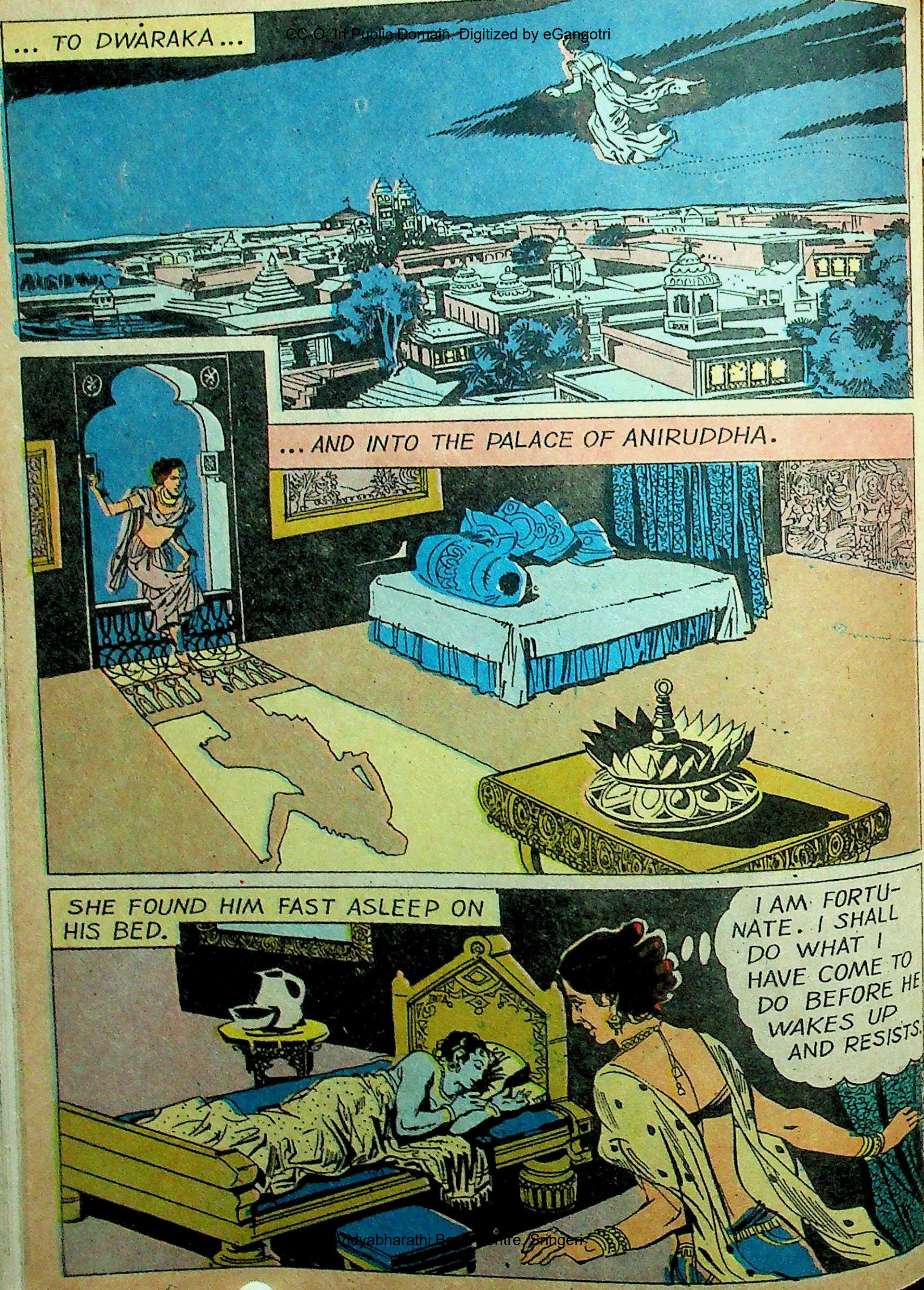

CHITRALEKHA CONSOLED HER.
DO NOT GRIEVE, MY PRINCESS. IF THIS PRINCE EXISTS, I CAN AND SHALL BRING HIM TO YOU.


BUT FIRST YOU WILL HAVE TO IDENTIFY HIM FOR ME FROM AMONG THE MANY PORTRAITS I SHALL PAINT FOR YOU.


CHITRALEKHA FIRST PAINTED A NUMBER OF GODS ...
IS HE ONE OF THESE?
NO!


... GANDHARVAS ...
OR THESE?
NO!
... AND YAKSHAS.
PERHAPS THESE?
NO!
THEN WHEN AMONG THE VARIOUS PORTRAITS SHE PAINTED KRISHNA AND HIS SON PRADYUMNA –
IS HE EITHER OF THESE?
NO! BUT...
USHA WAS ABASHED, BECAUSE THEY RESEMBLED CLOSELY THE PRINCE OF HER DREAM.


AT LAST CHITRALEKHA DREW THE PORTRAIT OF ANIRUDDHA, SON OF PRADYUMNA. USHA, SUDDENLY SHY, CAST HER EYES DOWN.
THIS IS HE!
HE SHALL SOON BE HERE WITH YOU.
I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN! SURELY, AMONG MEN, IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE VALIANT YADAVA RACE WHO COULD HAVE DISTURBED MY PRINCESS.
THEN CHITRALEKHA WITH THE HELP OF HER YOGIC POWERS CONVEYED HERSELF...


... TO DWARAKA ...
... AND INTO THE PALACE OF ANIRUDDHA.
SHE FOUND HIM FAST ASLEEP ON HIS BED.
I AM FORTUNATE. I SHALL DO WHAT I HAVE COME TO DO BEFORE HE WAKES UP AND RESISTS.

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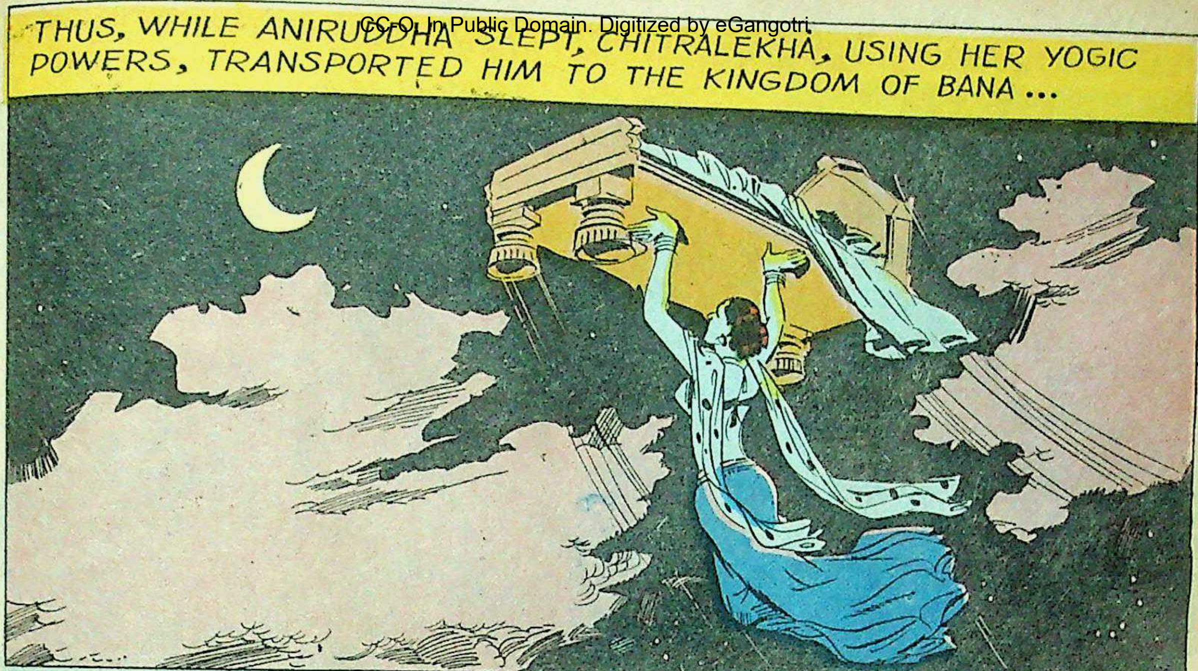
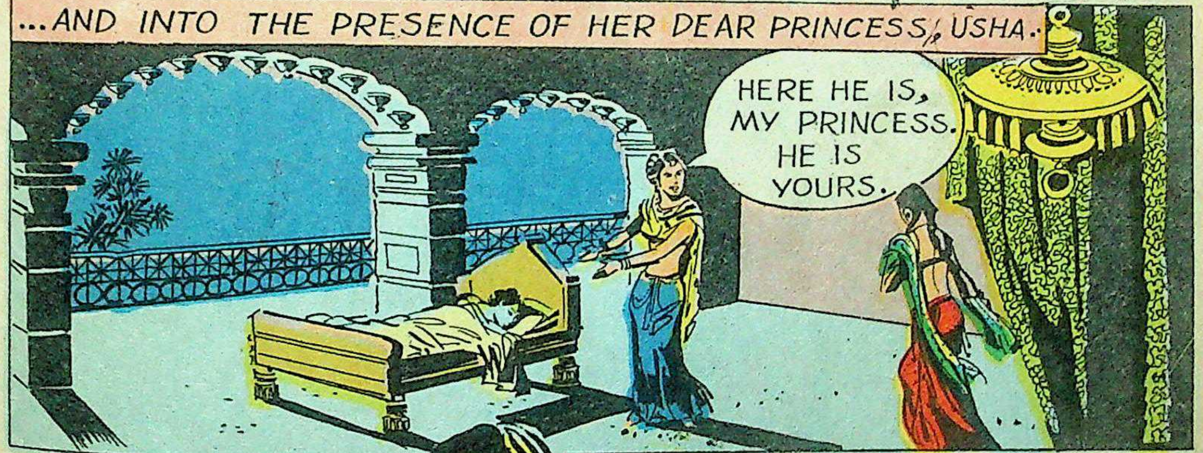
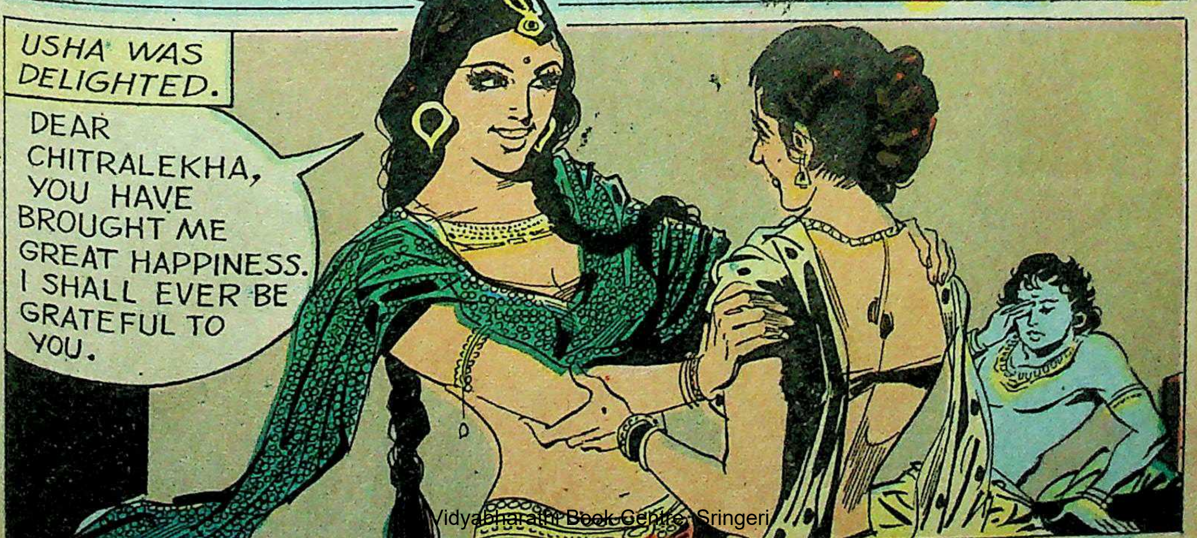
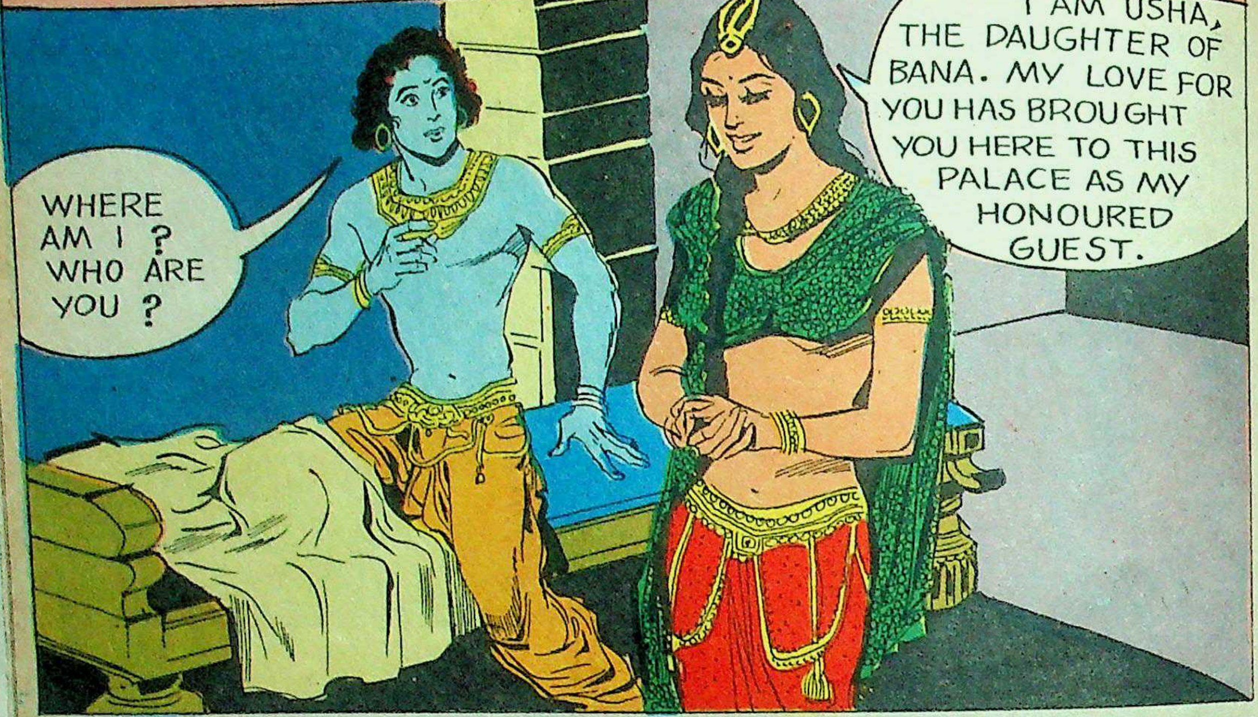
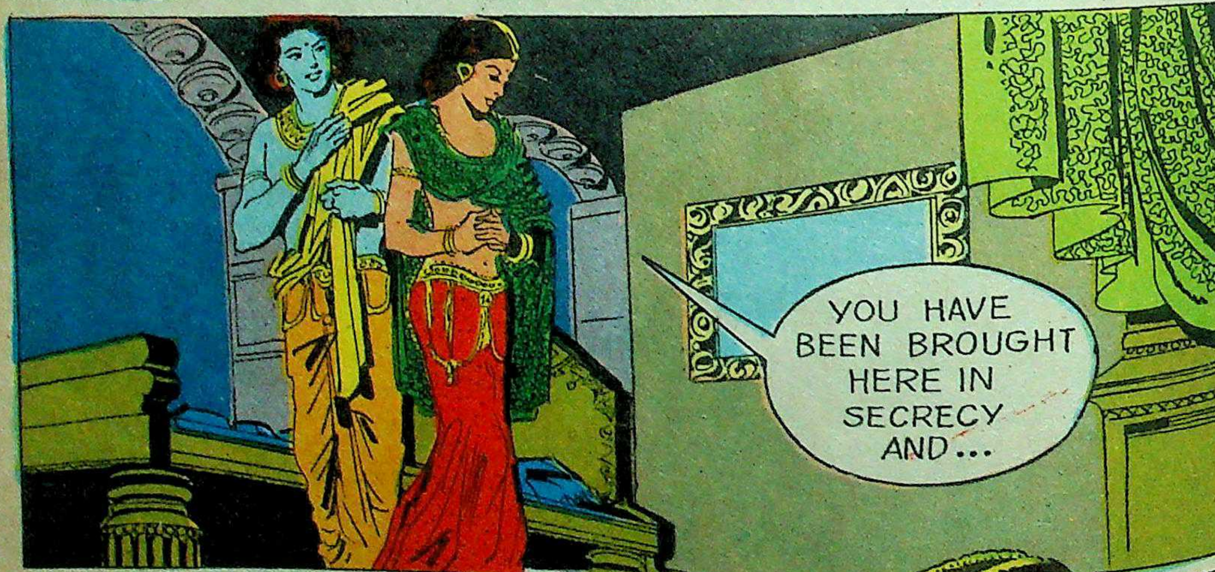

THUS, WHILE ANIRUDDHA SLEPT, CHITRALEKHA, USING HER YOGIC POWERS, TRANSPORTED HIM TO THE KINGDOM OF BANA ...

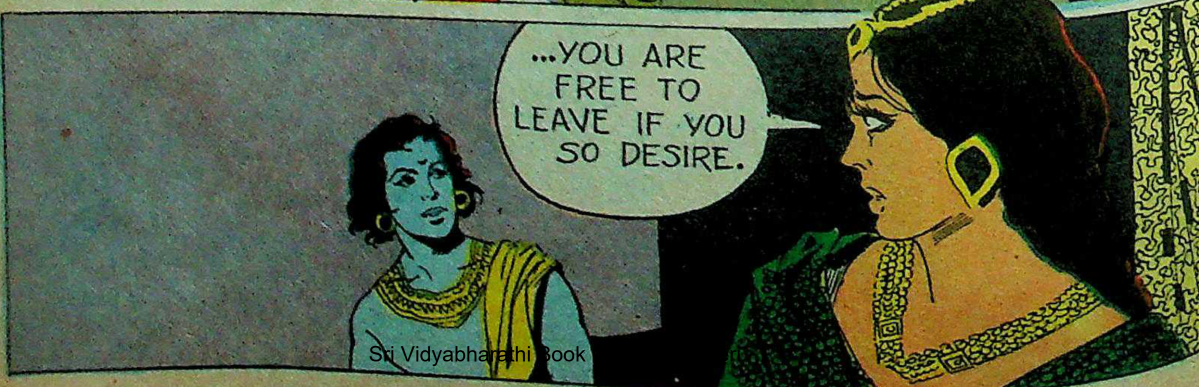

...AND INTO THE PRESENCE OF HER DEAR PRINCESS, USHA.
HERE HE IS, MY PRINCESS. HE IS YOURS.

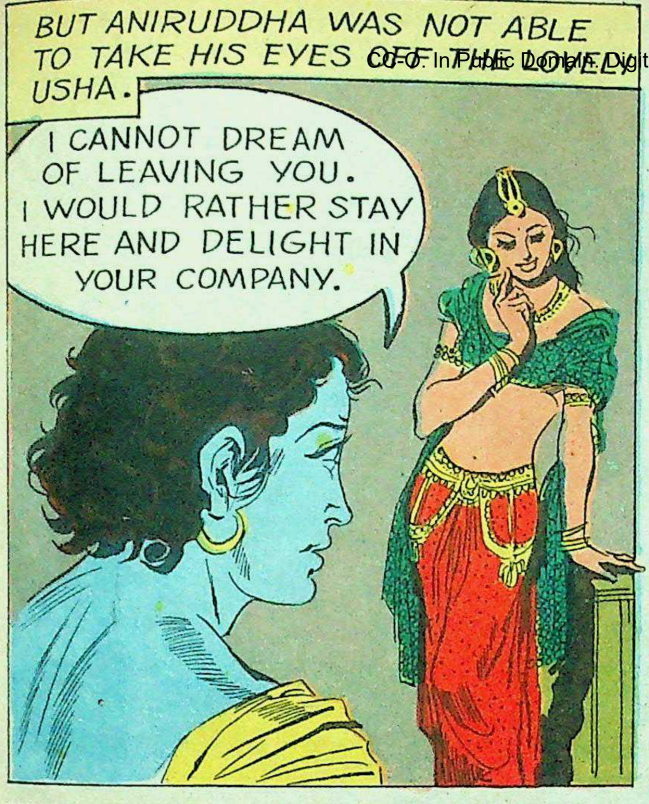

USHA WAS DELIGHTED.
DEAR CHITRALEKHA, YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME GREAT HAPPINESS. I SHALL EVER BE GRATEFUL TO YOU.

CHITRALEKHA WENT AWAY, LEAVING USHA WITH ANIRUDDHA.


WHERE AM I ? WHO ARE YOU ?
I AM USHA, THE DAUGHTER OF BANA. MY LOVE FOR YOU HAS BROUGHT YOU HERE TO THIS PALACE AS MY HONOURED GUEST.

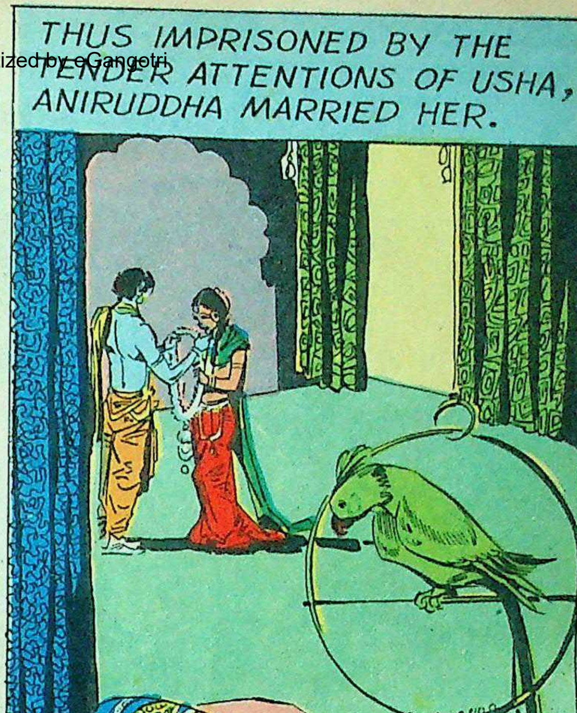

YOU HAVE BEEN BROUGHT HERE IN SECRECY AND...


...YOU ARE FREE TO LEAVE IF YOU SO DESIRE.

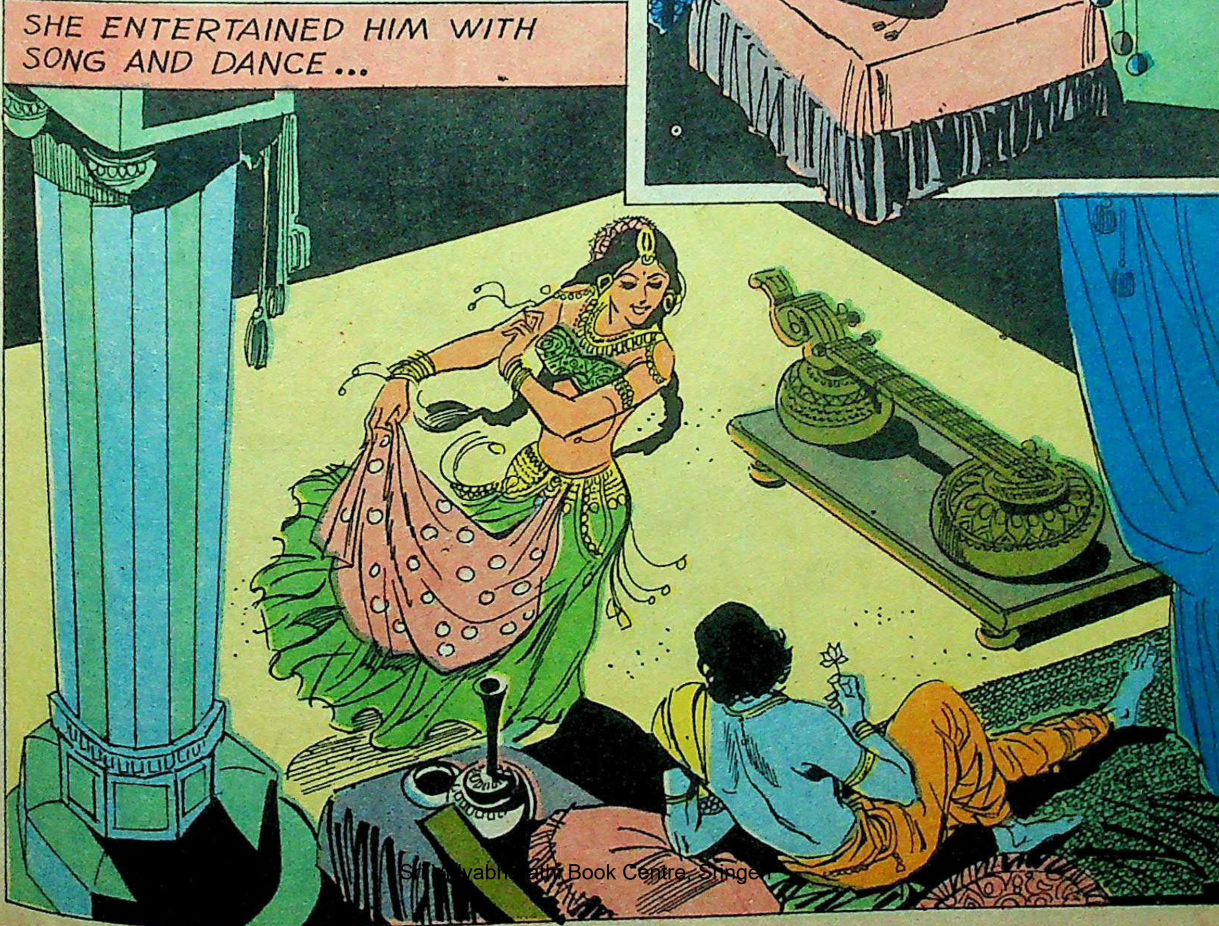


BUT ANIRUDDHA WAS NOT ABLE TO TAKE HIS EYES OFF THE LOVELY USHA.

I CANNOT DREAM OF LEAVING YOU. I WOULD RATHER STAY HERE AND DELIGHT IN YOUR COMPANY.



THUS IMPRISONED BY THE TENDER ATTENTIONS OF USHA, ANIRUDDHA MARRIED HER.



SHE ENTERTAINED HIM WITH SONG AND DANCE...

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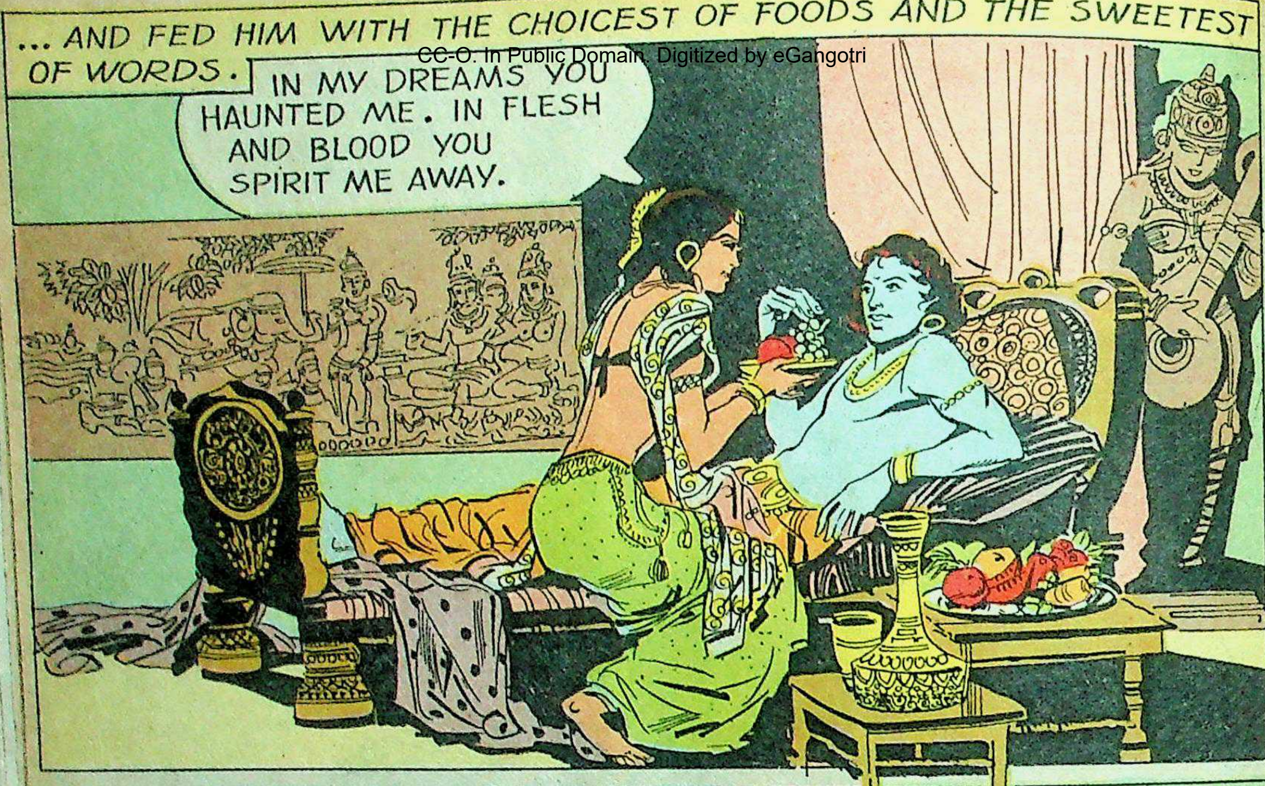
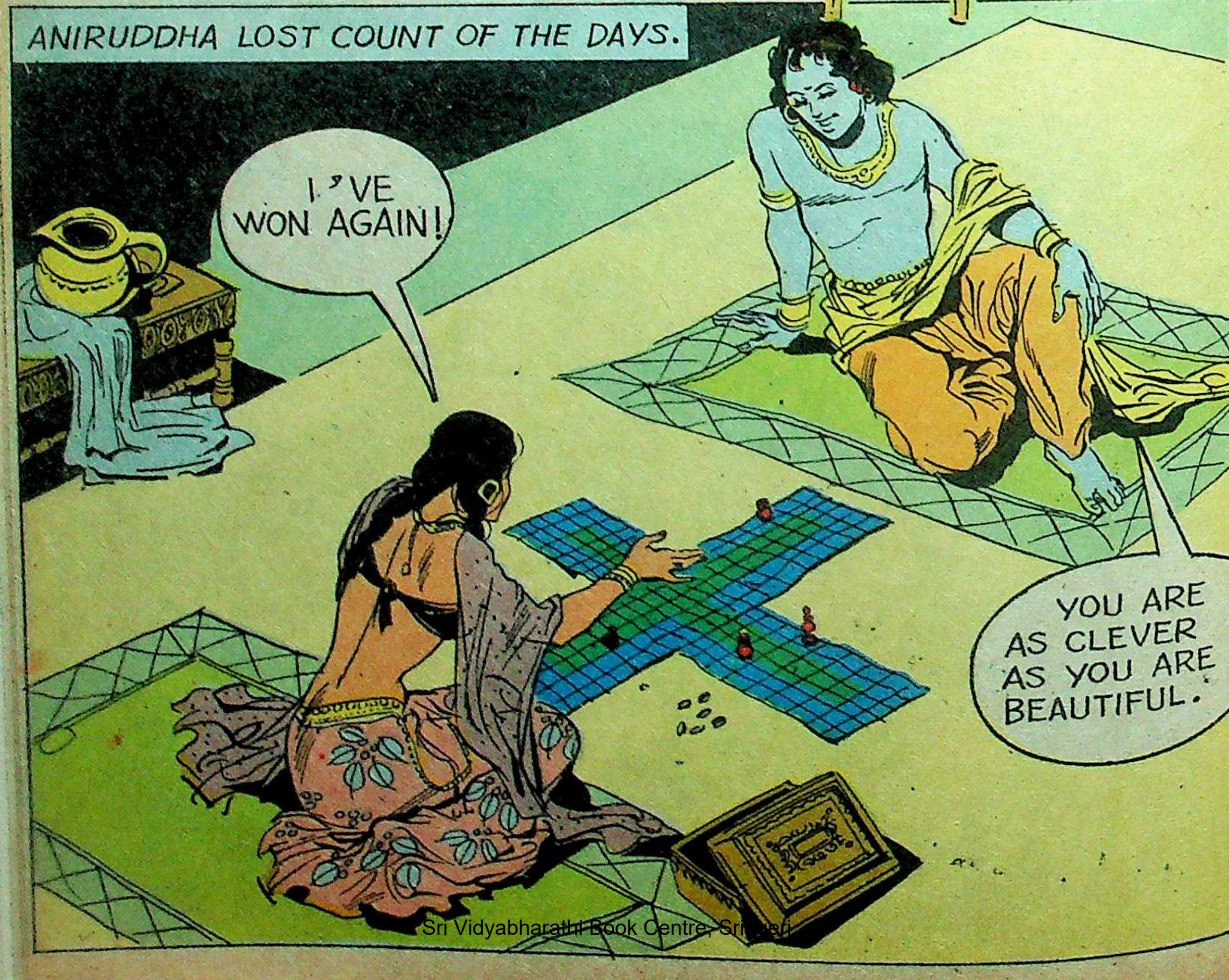
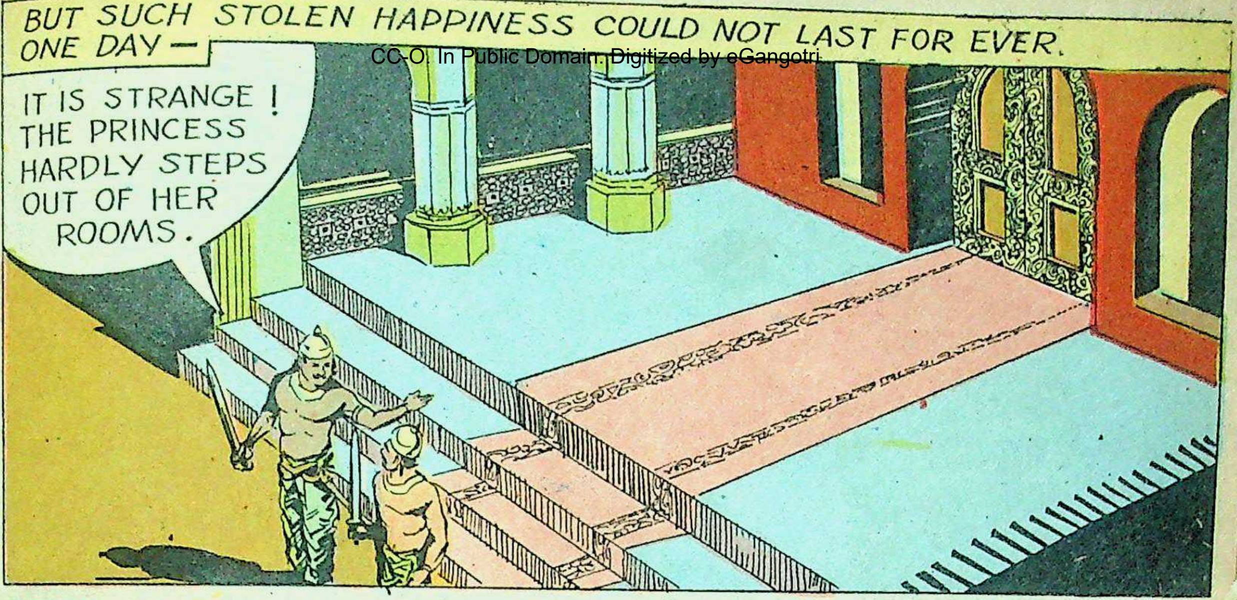
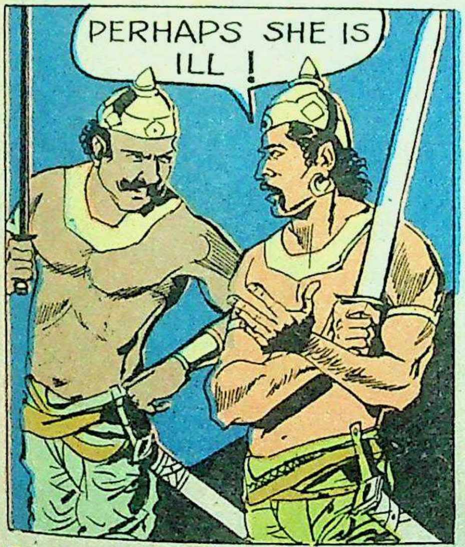
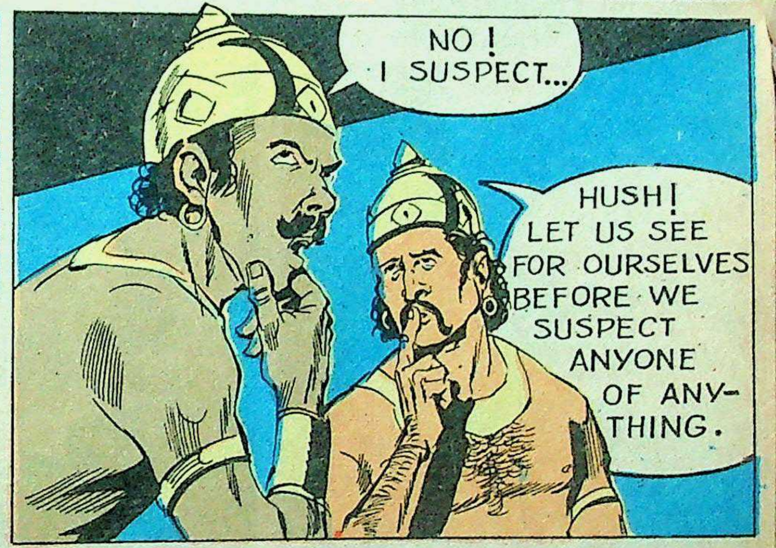

... AND FED HIM WITH THE CHOICEST OF FOODS AND THE SWEETEST OF WORDS.
IN MY DREAMS YOU HAUNTED ME. IN FLESH AND BLOOD YOU SPIRIT ME AWAY.


ANIRUDDHA LOST COUNT OF THE DAYS.
I'VE WON AGAIN!
YOU ARE AS CLEVER AS YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL.

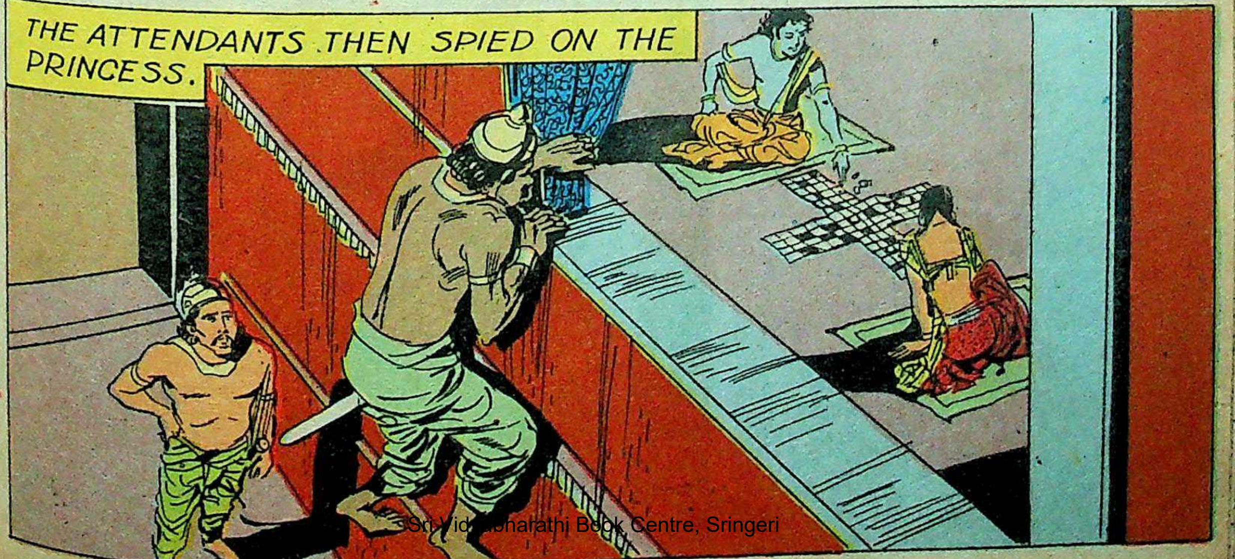
BUT SUCH STOLEN HAPPINESS COULD NOT LAST FOR EVER. ONE DAY —

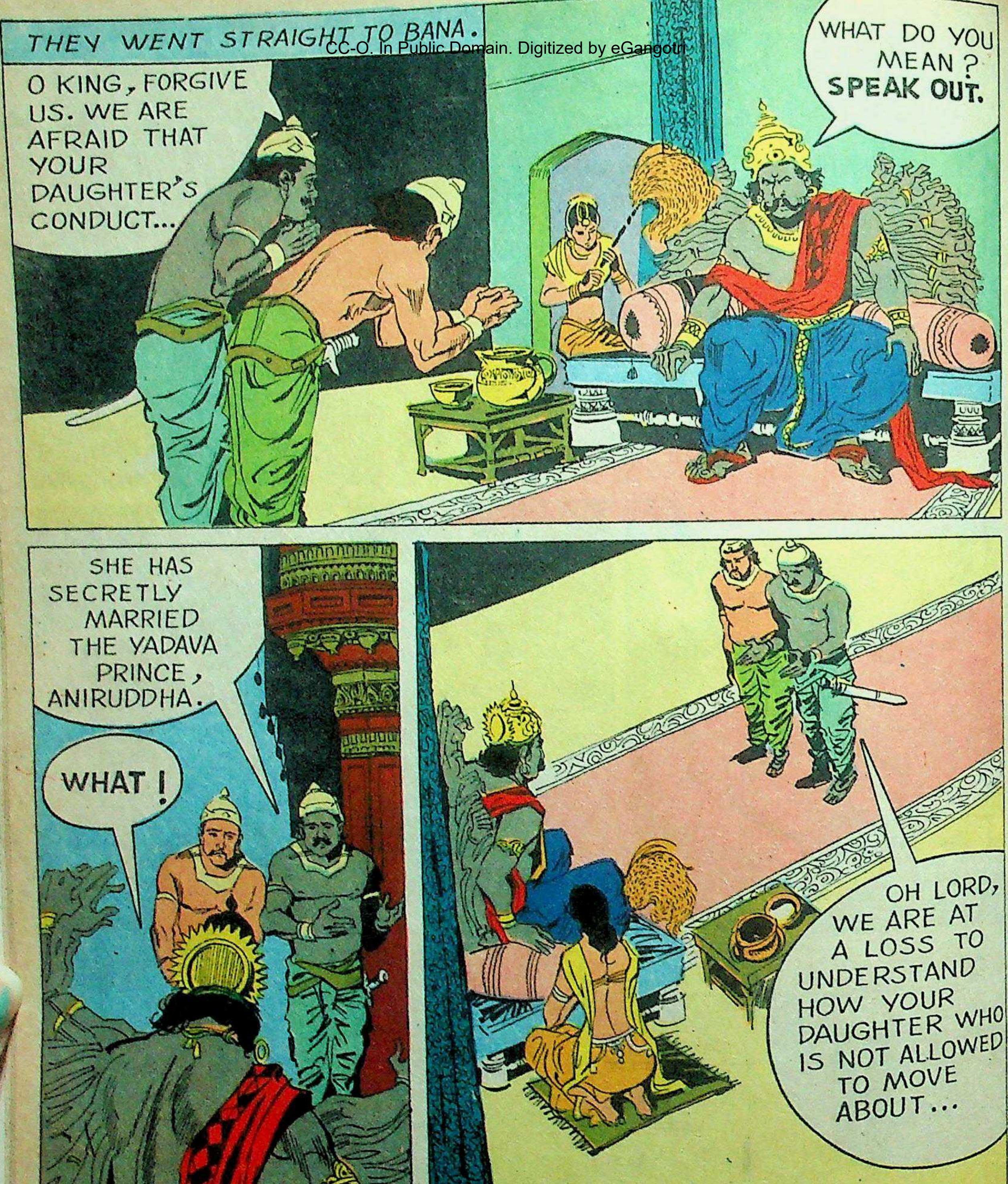

IT IS STRANGE ! THE PRINCESS HARDLY STEPS OUT OF HER ROOMS.

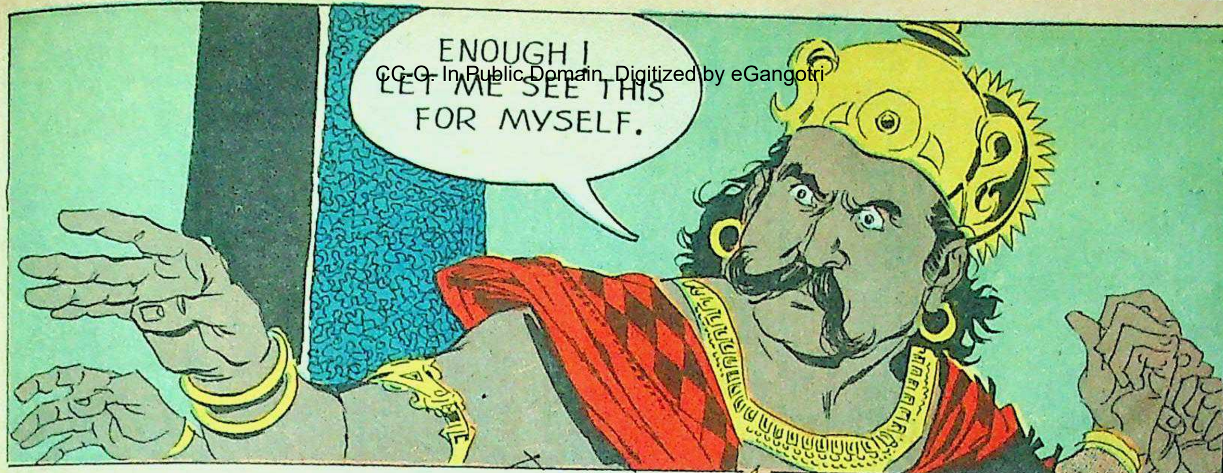

PERHAPS SHE IS ILL !

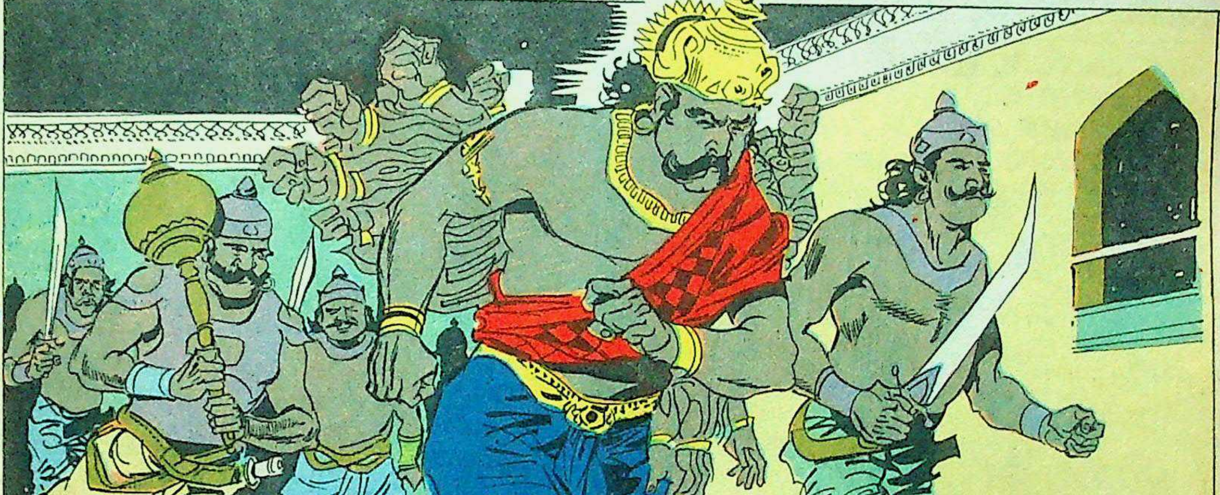

NO ! I SUSPECT...
HUSH ! LET US SEE FOR OURSELVES BEFORE WE SUSPECT ANYONE OF ANYTHING.

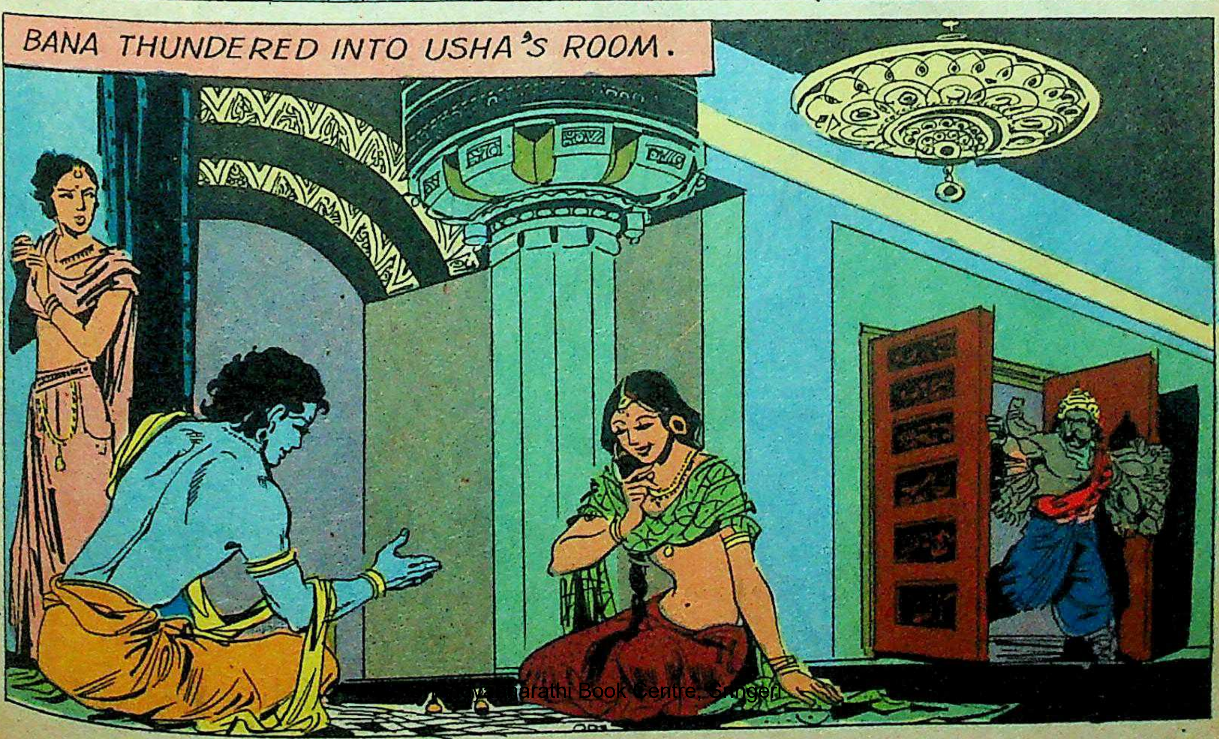
THE ATTENDANTS THEN SPIED ON THE PRINCESS.

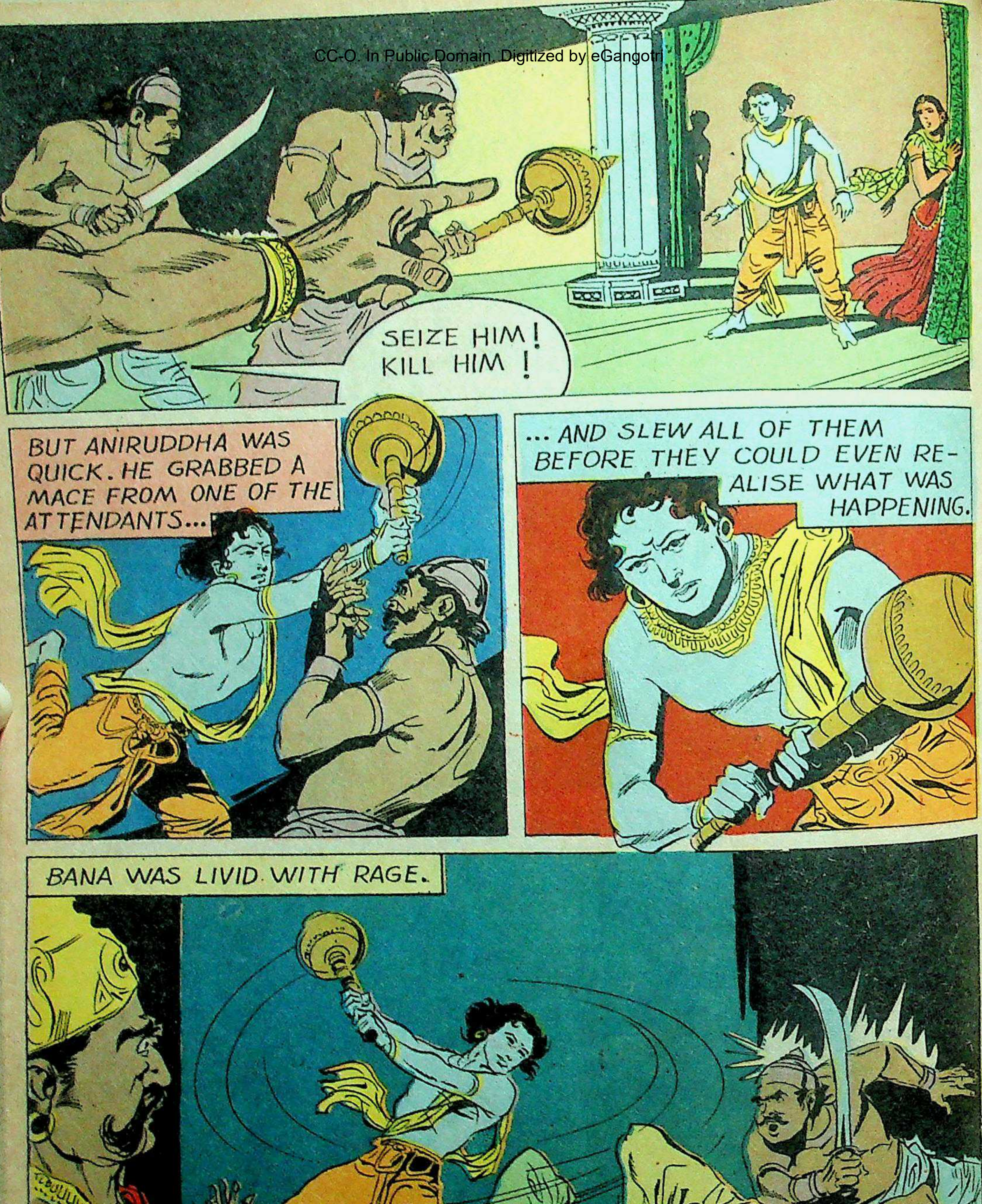


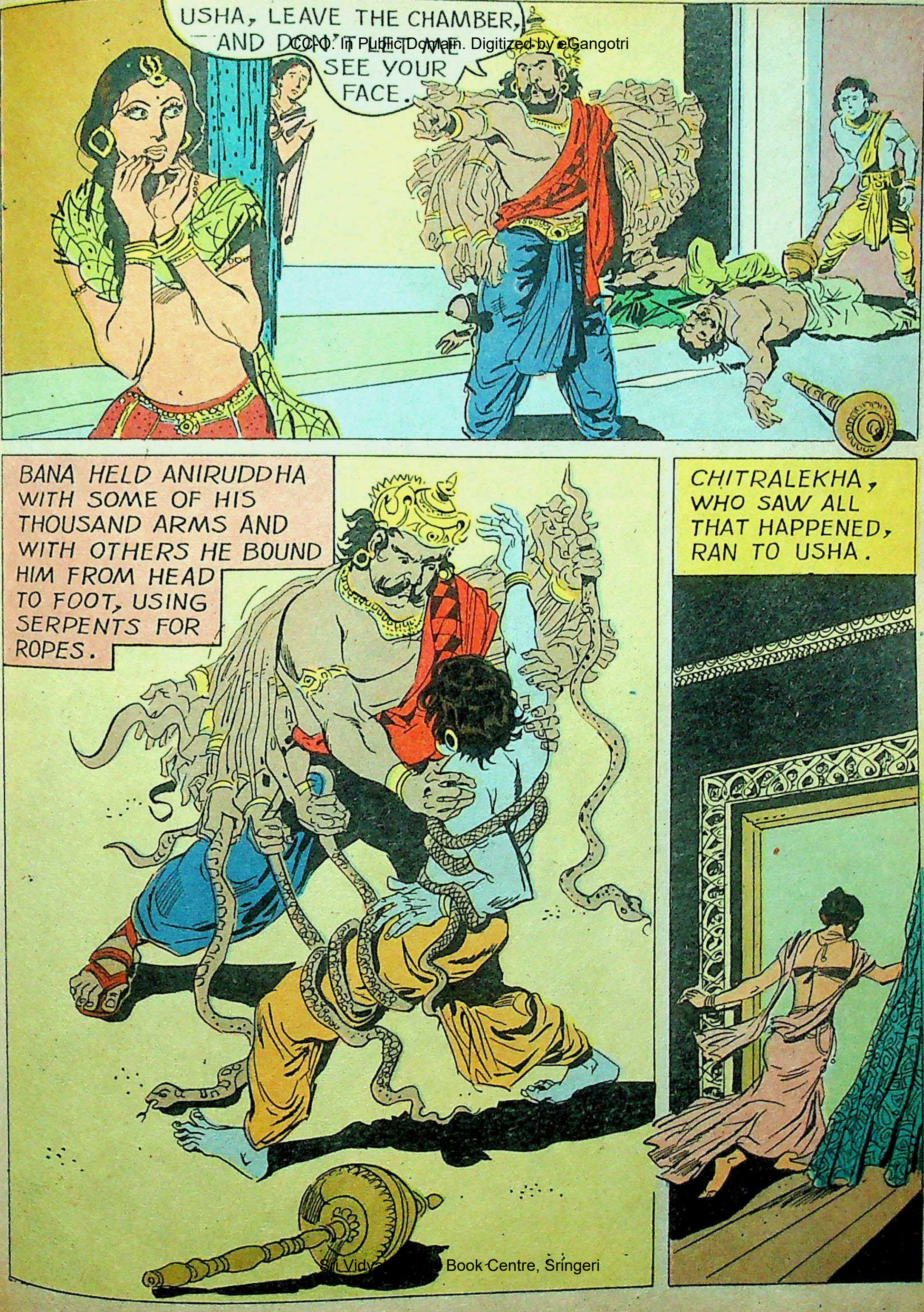

THEY WENT STRAIGHT TO BANA.
O KING, FORGIVE US. WE ARE AFRAID THAT YOUR DAUGHTER'S CONDUCT...
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? **SPEAK OUT.**
SHE HAS SECRETLY MARRIED THE YADAVA PRINCE, ANIRUDDHA.
WHAT!
OH LORD, WE ARE AT A LOSS TO UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR DAUGHTER WHO IS NOT ALLOWED TO MOVE ABOUT...


ENOUGH ! LET ME SEE THIS FOR MYSELF.




BANA THUNDERED INTO USHA'S ROOM.


SEIZE HIM! KILL HIM!
BUT ANIRUDDHA WAS QUICK. HE GRABBED A MACE FROM ONE OF THE ATTENDANTS...
... AND SLEW ALL OF THEM BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN REALISE WHAT WAS HAPPENING.
BANA WAS LIVID WITH RAGE.


USHA, LEAVE THE CHAMBER, AND DON'T LET ME SEE YOUR FACE.
BANA HELD ANIRUDDHA WITH SOME OF HIS THOUSAND ARMS AND WITH OTHERS HE BOUND HIM FROM HEAD TO FOOT, USING SERPENTS FOR ROPES.
CHITRALEKHA, WHO SAW ALL THAT HAPPENED, RAN TO USHA.

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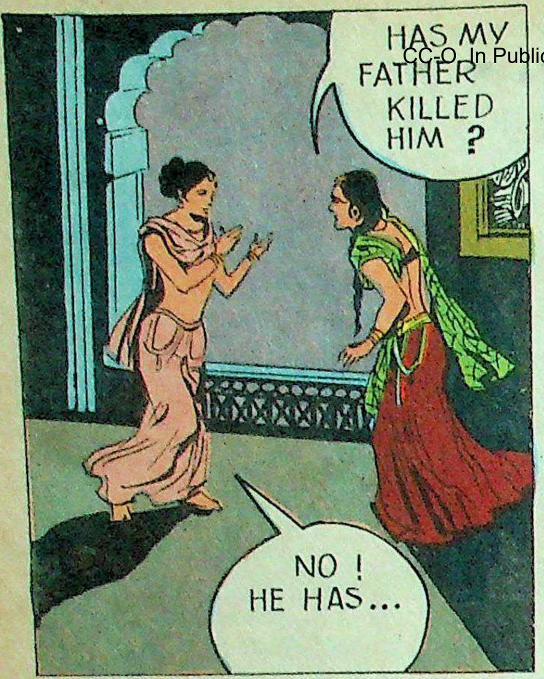
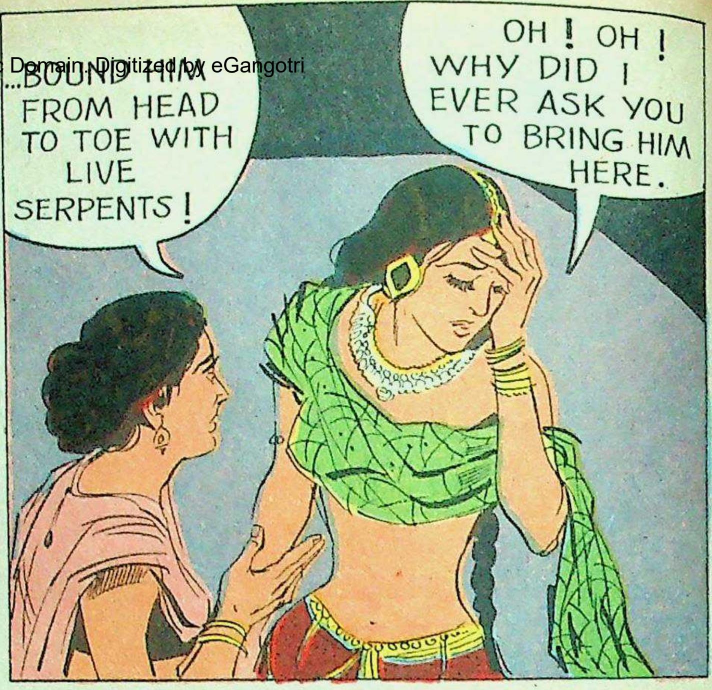
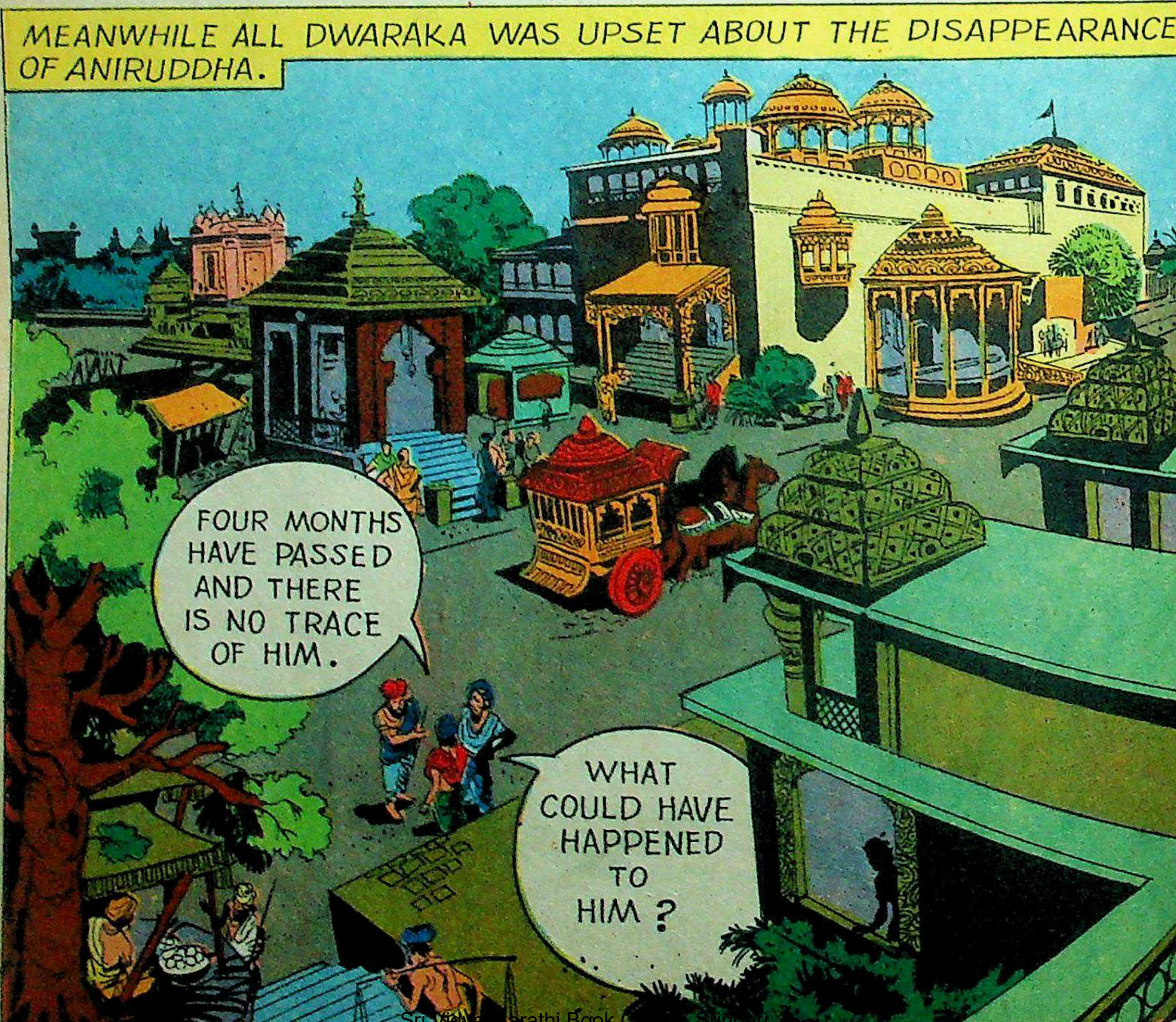
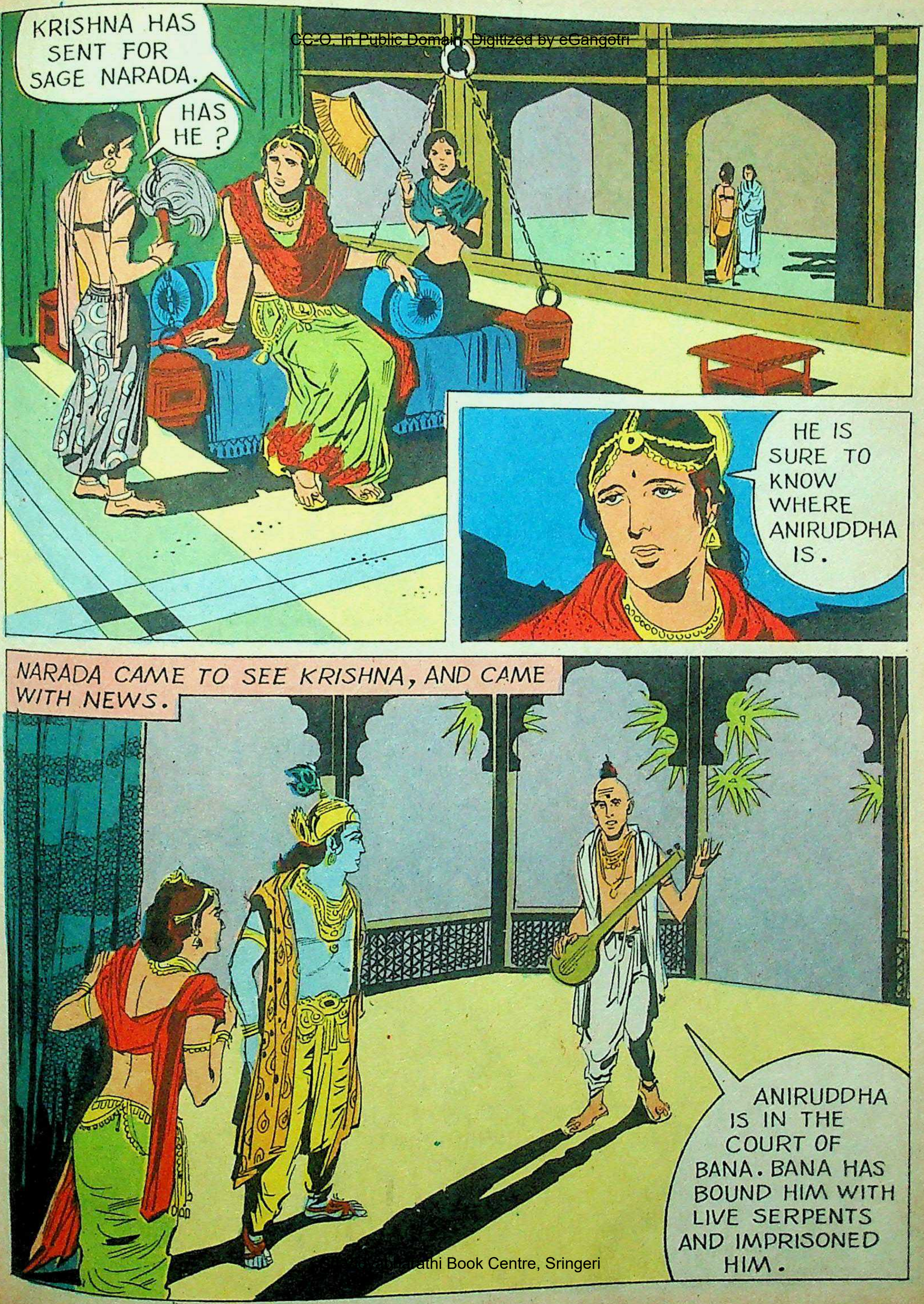
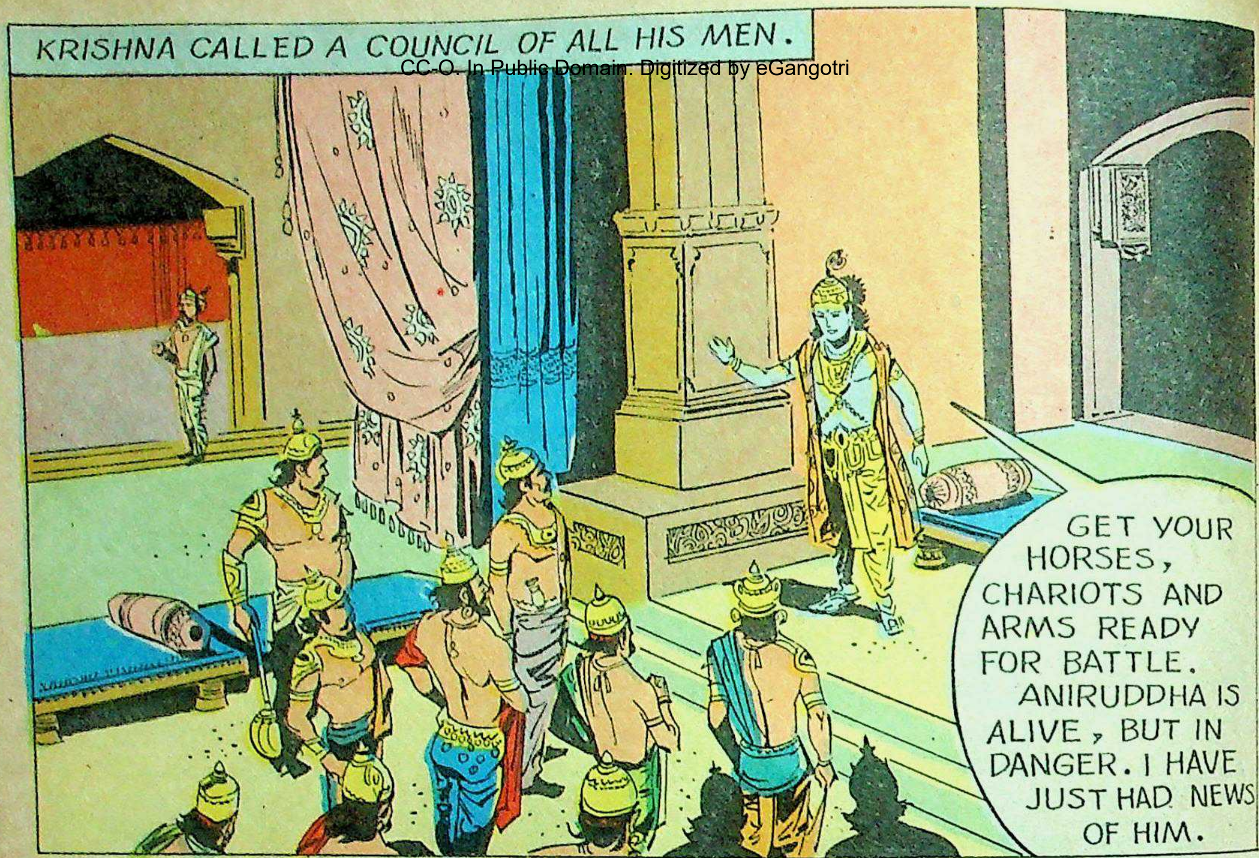

HAS MY FATHER KILLED HIM ?
NO ! HE HAS...


...BOUND HIM FROM HEAD TO TOE WITH LIVE SERPENTS !
OH ! OH ! WHY DID I EVER ASK YOU TO BRING HIM HERE.

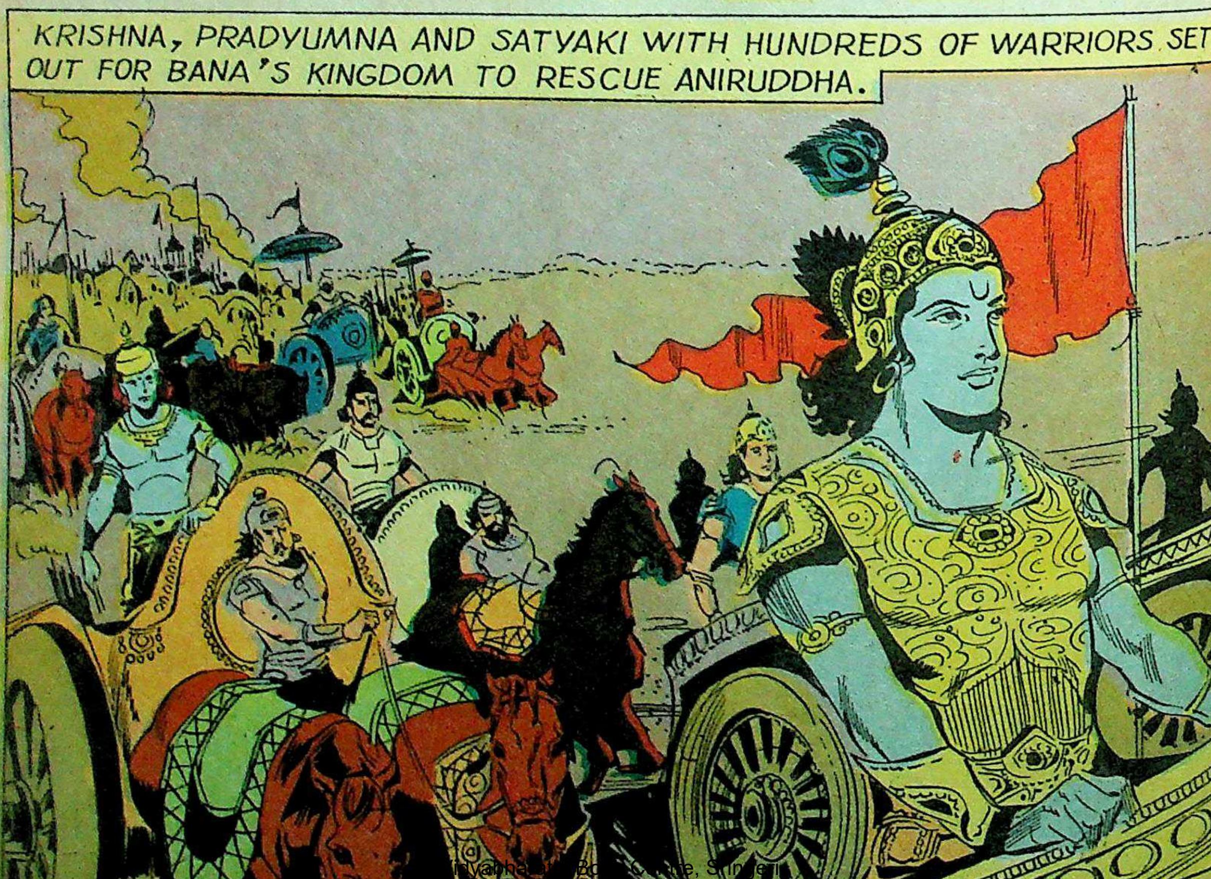

MEANWHILE ALL DWARAKA WAS UPSET ABOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ANIRUDDHA.
FOUR MONTHS HAVE PASSED AND THERE IS NO TRACE OF HIM.
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM ?


KRISHNA HAS SENT FOR SAGE NARADA.
HAS HE ?
HE IS SURE TO KNOW WHERE ANIRUDDHA IS.
NARADA CAME TO SEE KRISHNA, AND CAME WITH NEWS.
ANIRUDDHA IS IN THE COURT OF BANA. BANA HAS BOUND HIM WITH LIVE SERPENTS AND IMPRISONED HIM.

KRISHNA CALLED A COUNCIL OF ALL HIS MEN.


GET YOUR HORSES, CHARIOTS AND ARMS READY FOR BATTLE. ANIRUDDHA IS ALIVE, BUT IN DANGER. I HAVE JUST HAD NEWS OF HIM.

KRISHNA, PRADYUMNA AND SATYAKI WITH HUNDREDS OF WARRIORS SET OUT FOR BANA'S KINGDOM TO RESCUE ANIRUDDHA.



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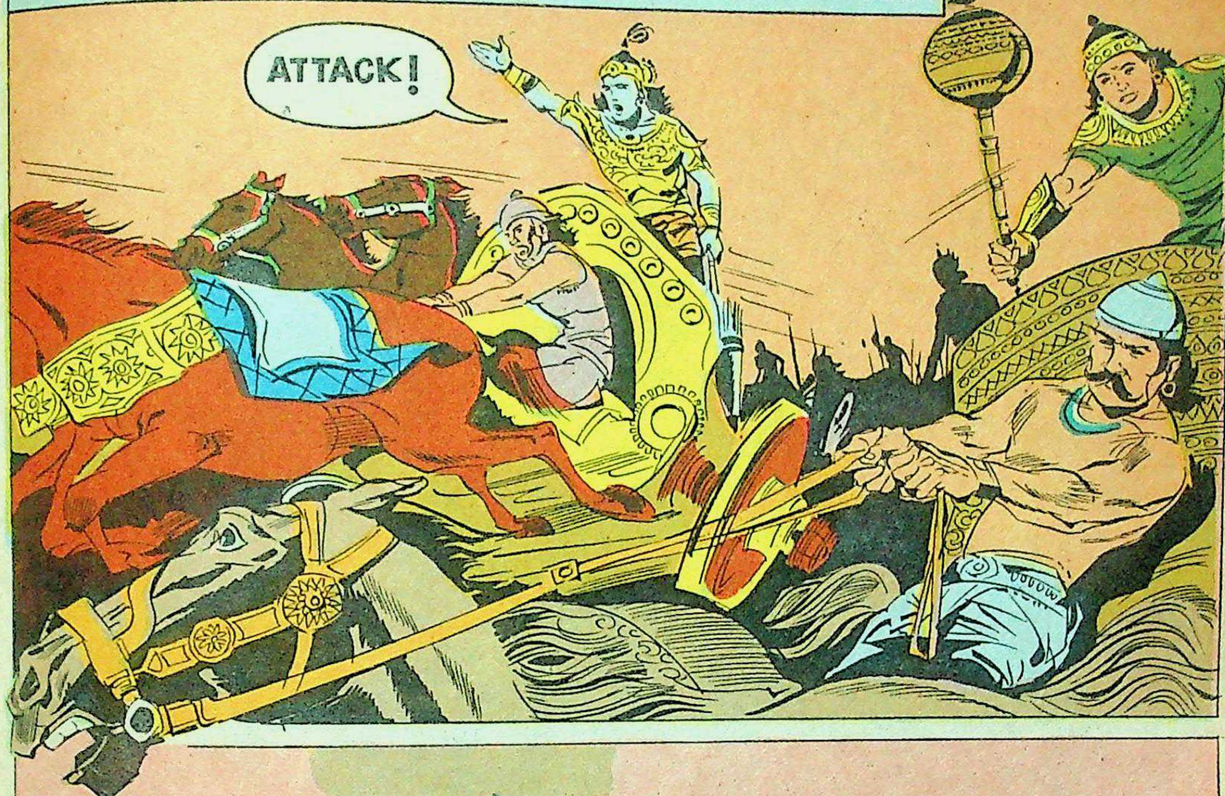
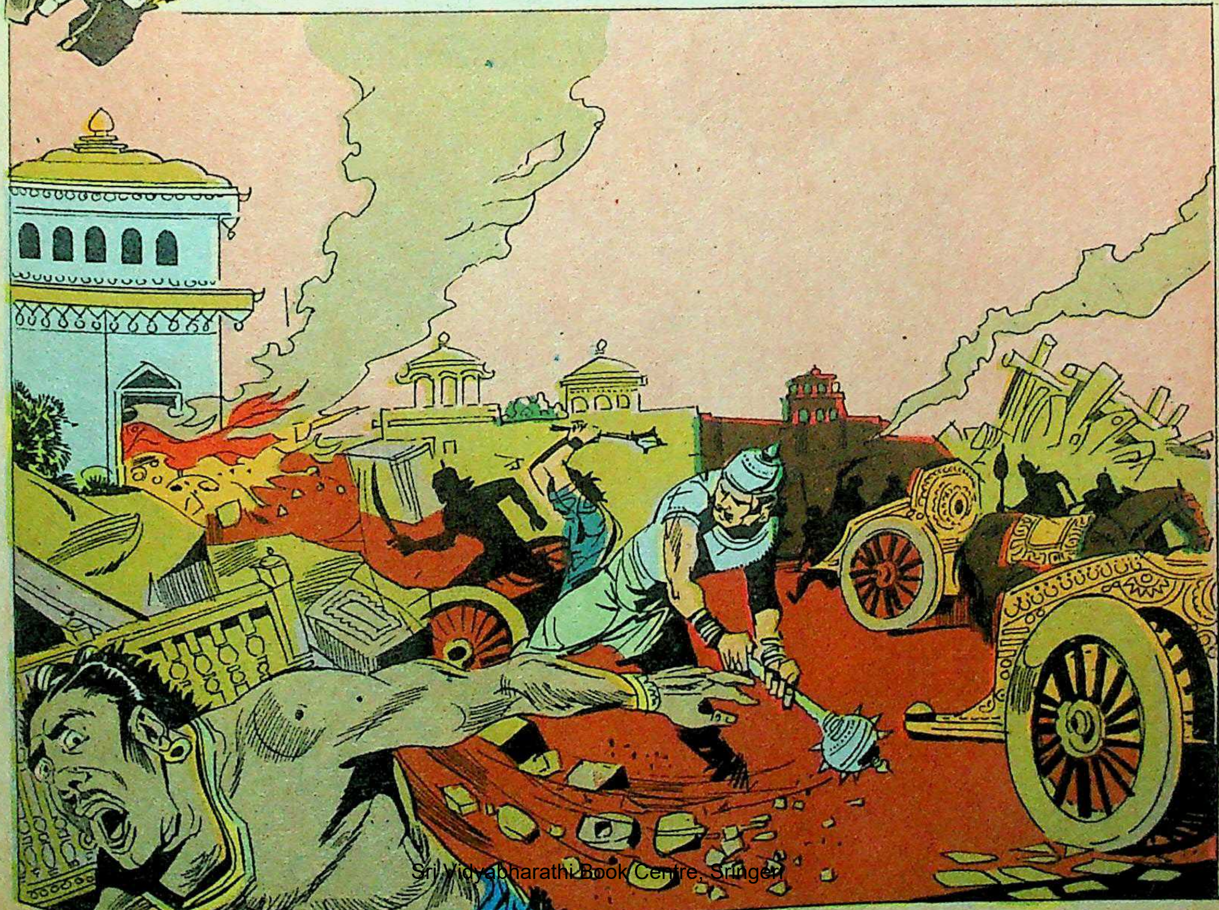
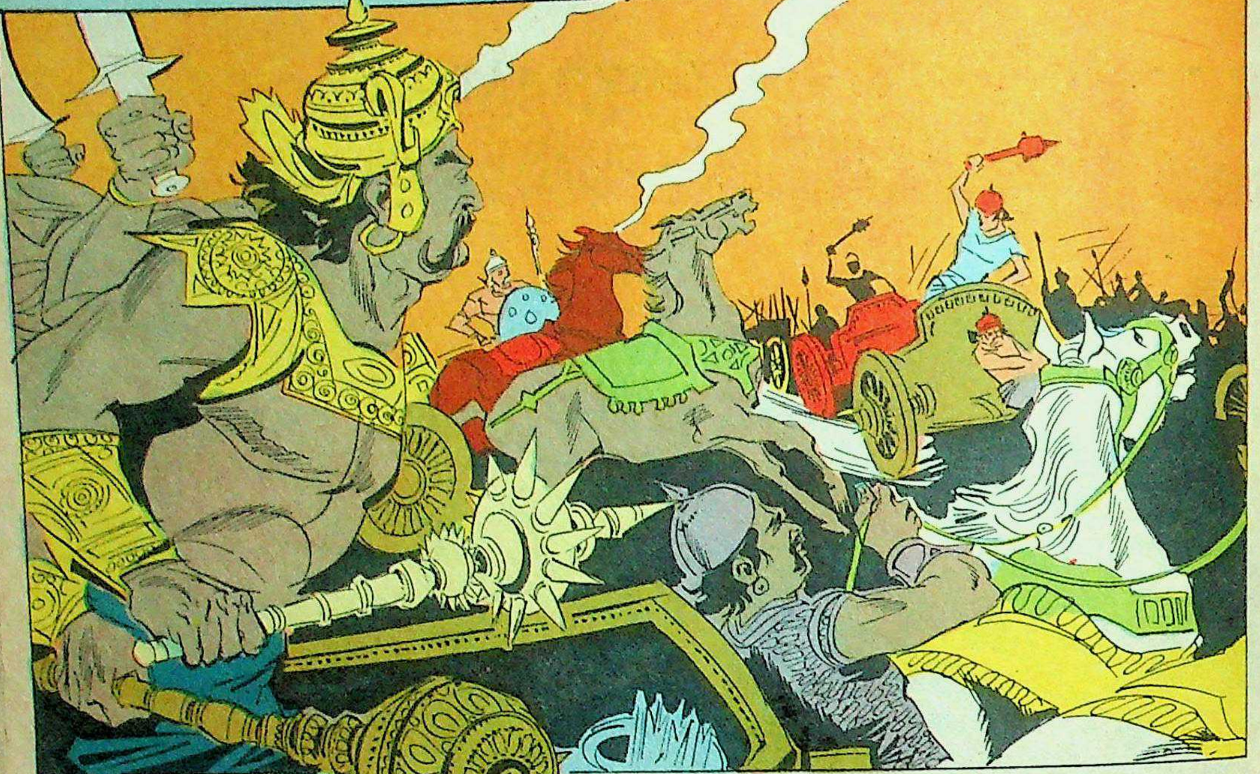
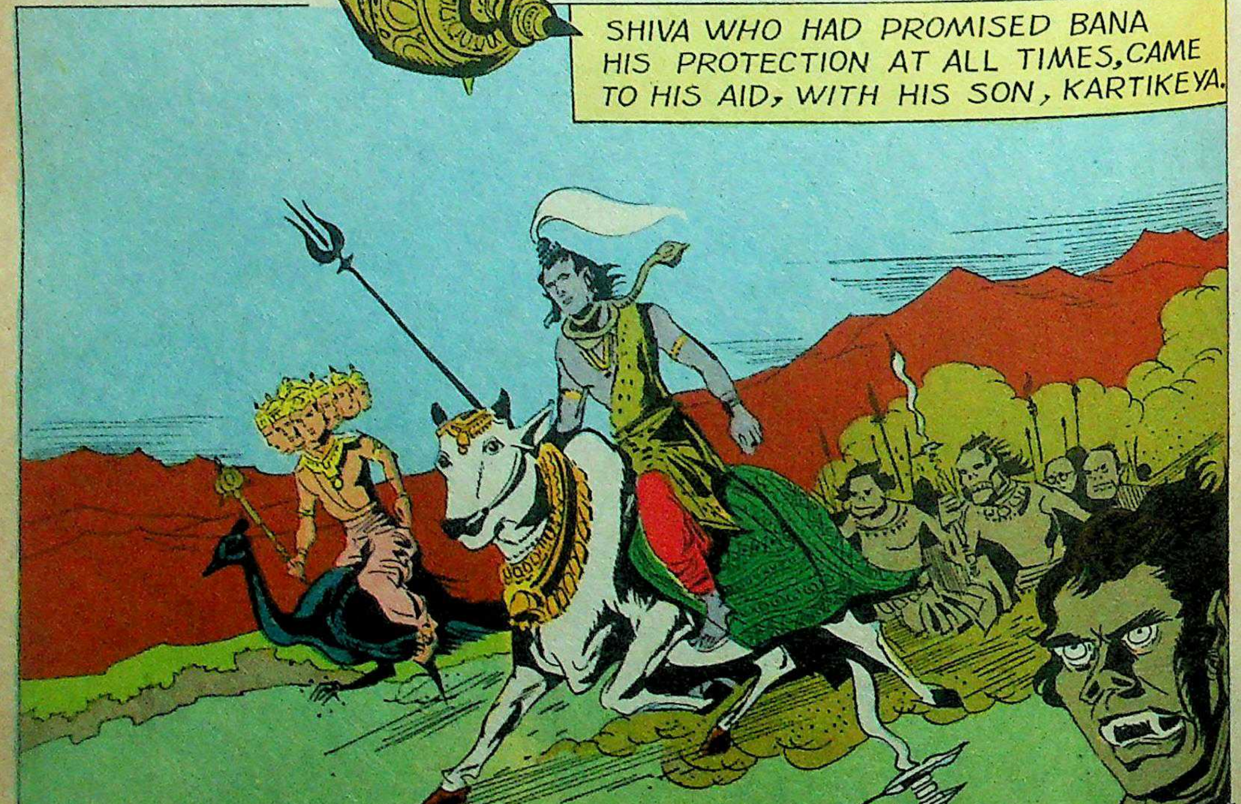
WHEN THEY REACHED, KRISHNA GAVE THE COMMAND.



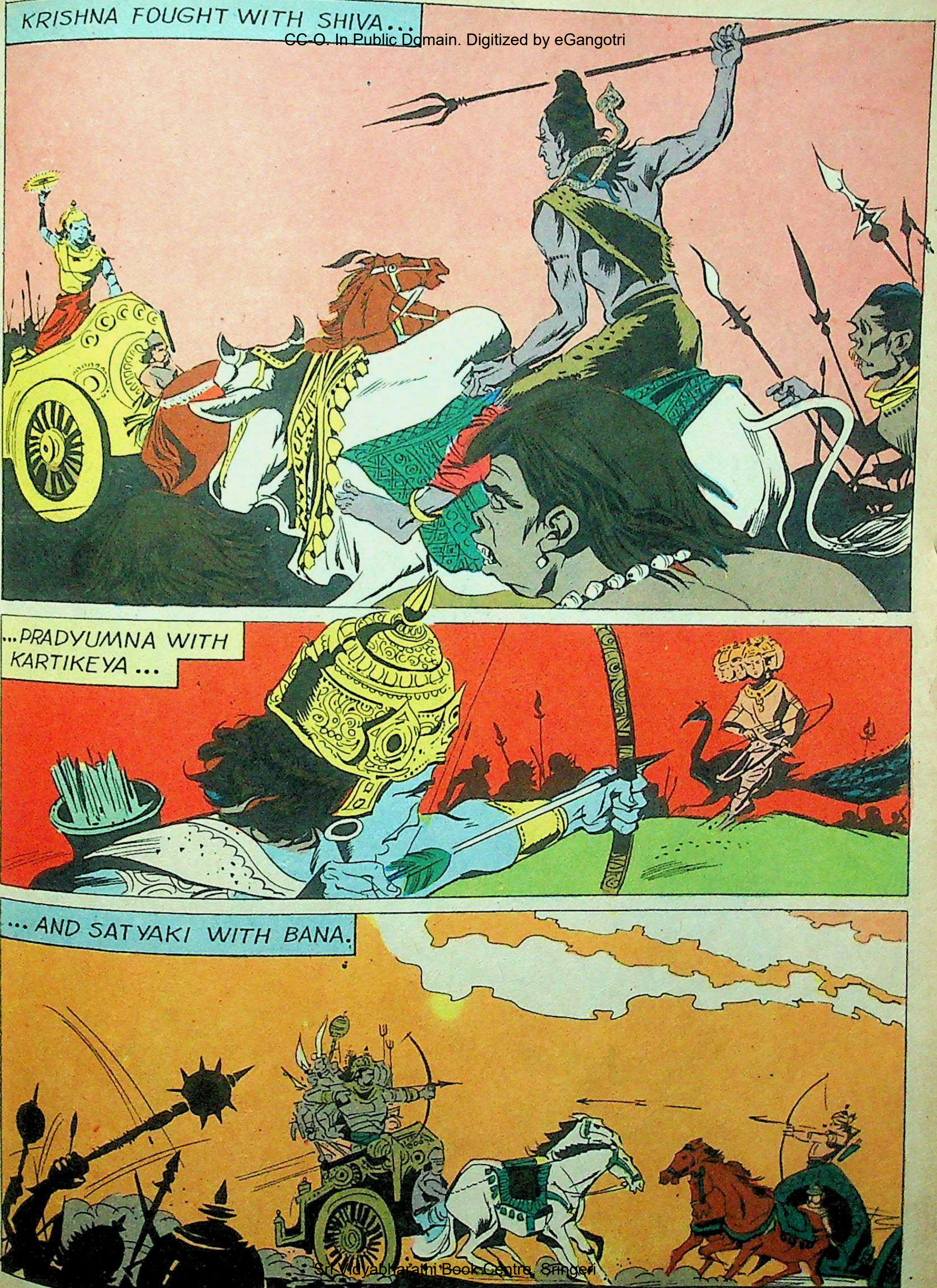


BANA'S RAGE KNEW NO BOUNDS. HE CAME OUT WITH AN EQUALLY LARGE ARMY AND A GREAT BATTLE ENSUED.

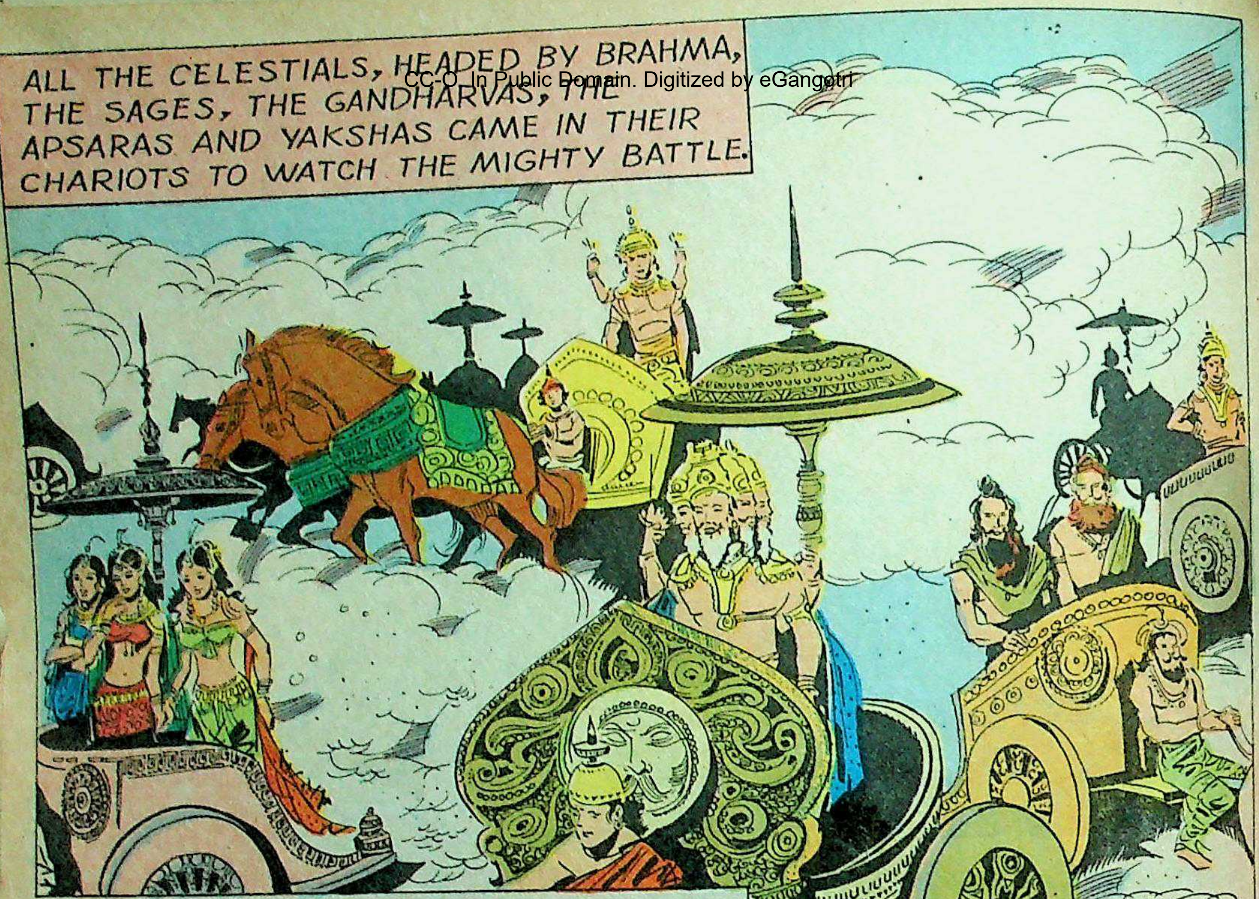




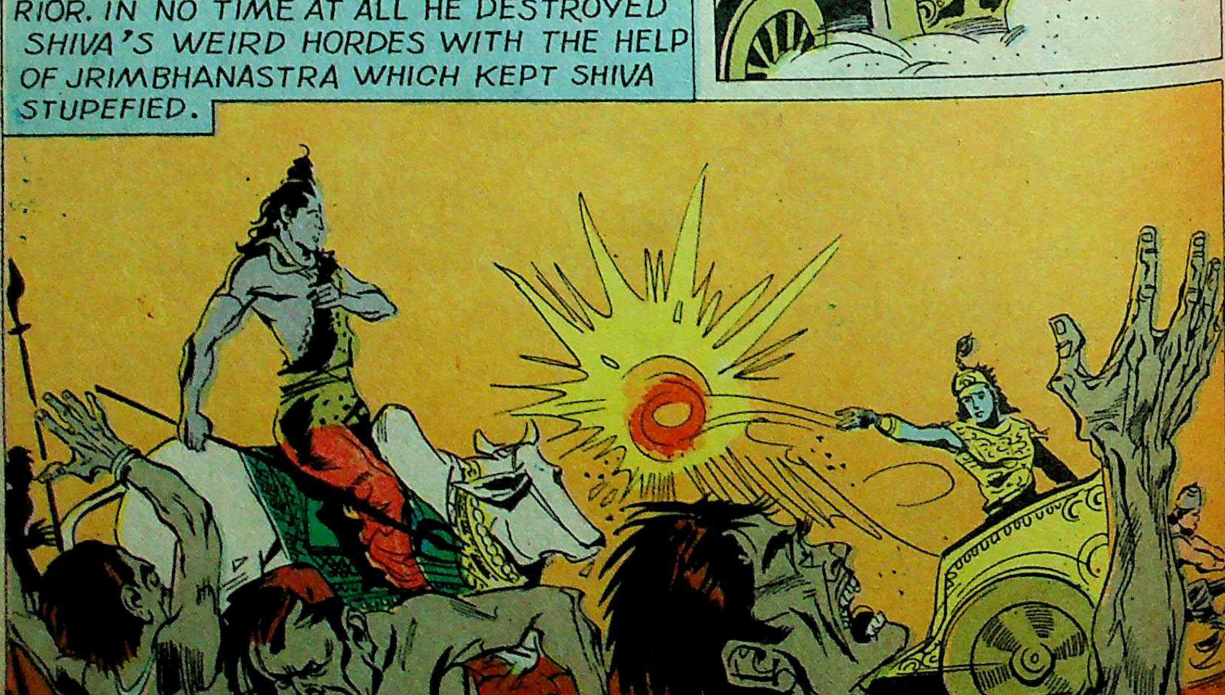
SHIVA WHO HAD PROMISED BANA HIS PROTECTION AT ALL TIMES, CAME TO HIS AID, WITH HIS SON, KARTIKEYA.


KRISHNA FOUGHT WITH SHIVA...
...PRADYUMNA WITH KARTIKEYA...
... AND SATYAKI WITH BANA.

ALL THE CELESTIALS, HEADED BY BRAHMA, THE SAGES, THE GANDHARVAS, THE APSARAS AND YAKSHAS CAME IN THEIR CHARIOTS TO WATCH THE MIGHTY BATTLE.



KRISHNA WAS EASILY THE BEST WARRIOR. IN NO TIME AT ALL HE DESTROYED SHIVA'S WEIRD HORDES WITH THE HELP OF JRIMBHANASTRA WHICH KEPT SHIVA STUPEFIED.



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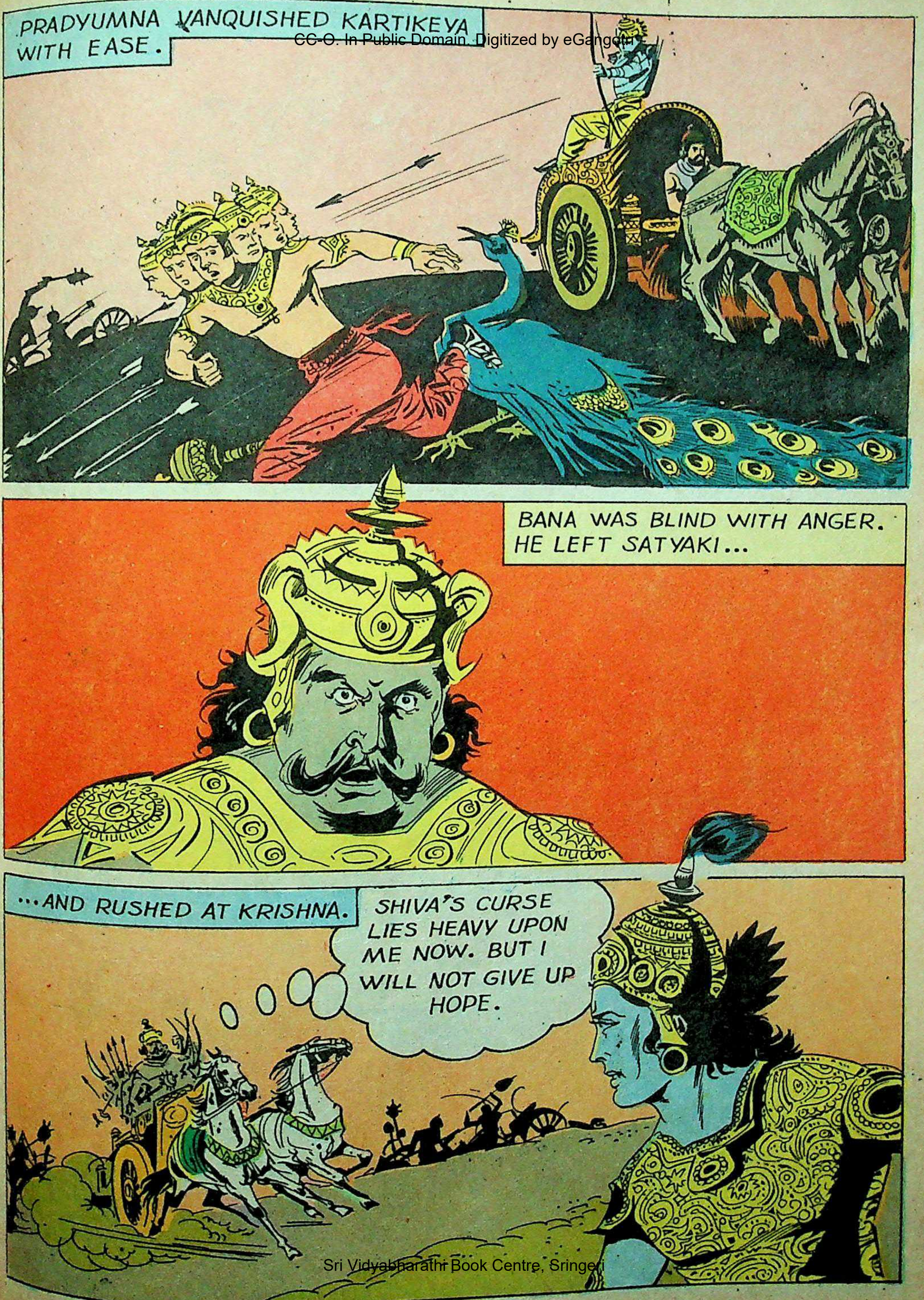
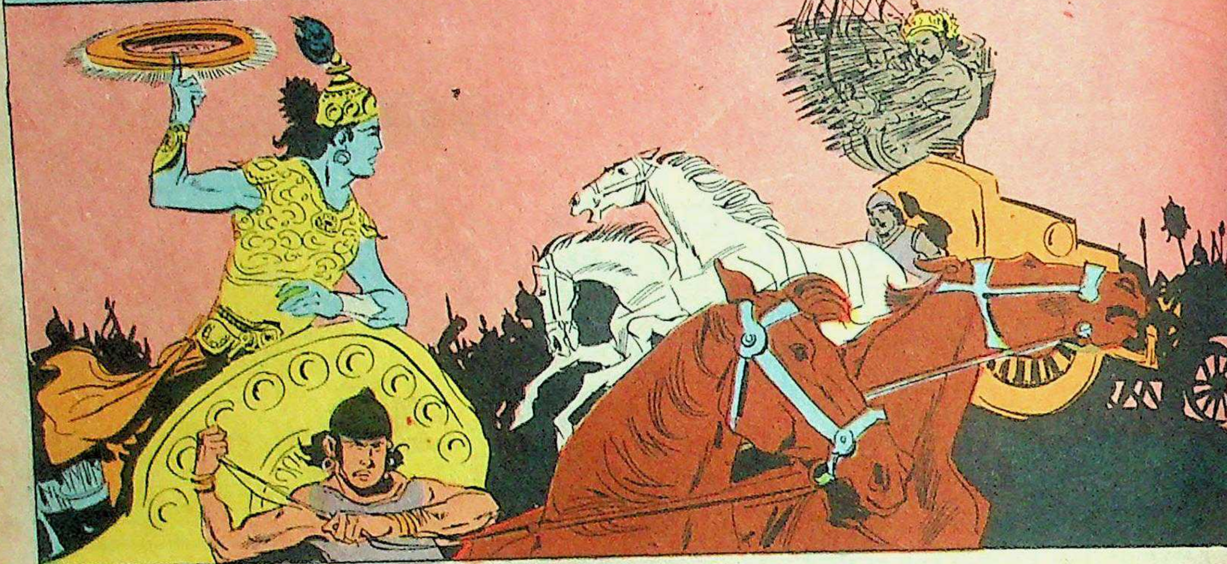
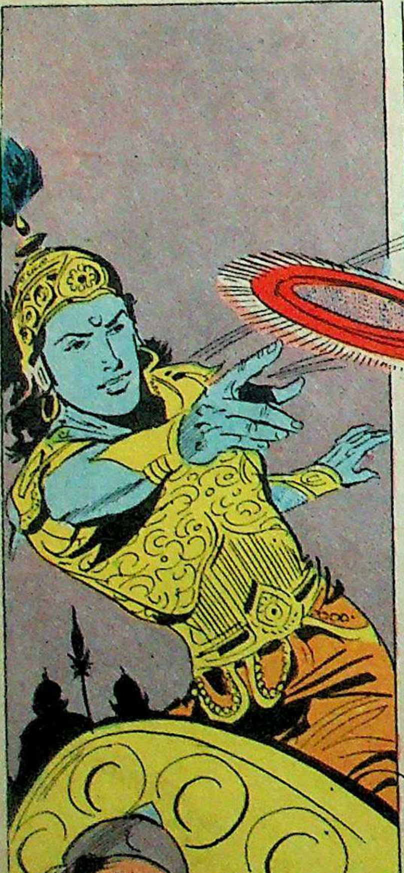
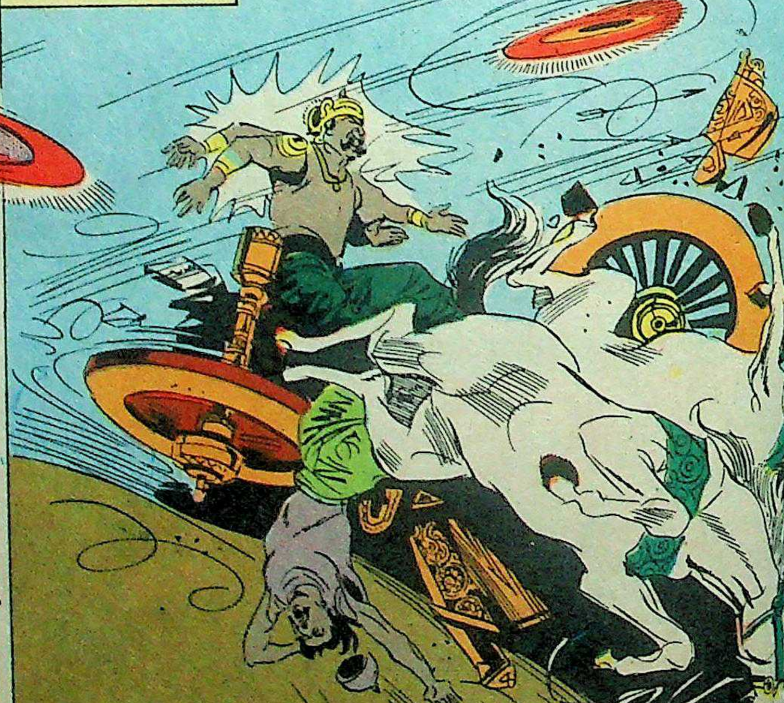

PRADYUMNA VANQUISHED KARTIKEYA WITH EASE.
BANA WAS BLIND WITH ANGER. HE LEFT SATYAKI...
...AND RUSHED AT KRISHNA.
SHIVA'S CURSE LIES HEAVY UPON ME NOW. BUT I WILL NOT GIVE UP HOPE.

WITH HIS THOUSAND ARMS, HE DREW FIVE HUNDRED BOWS AT THE SAME TIME AND SET TWO ARROWS IN EACH.

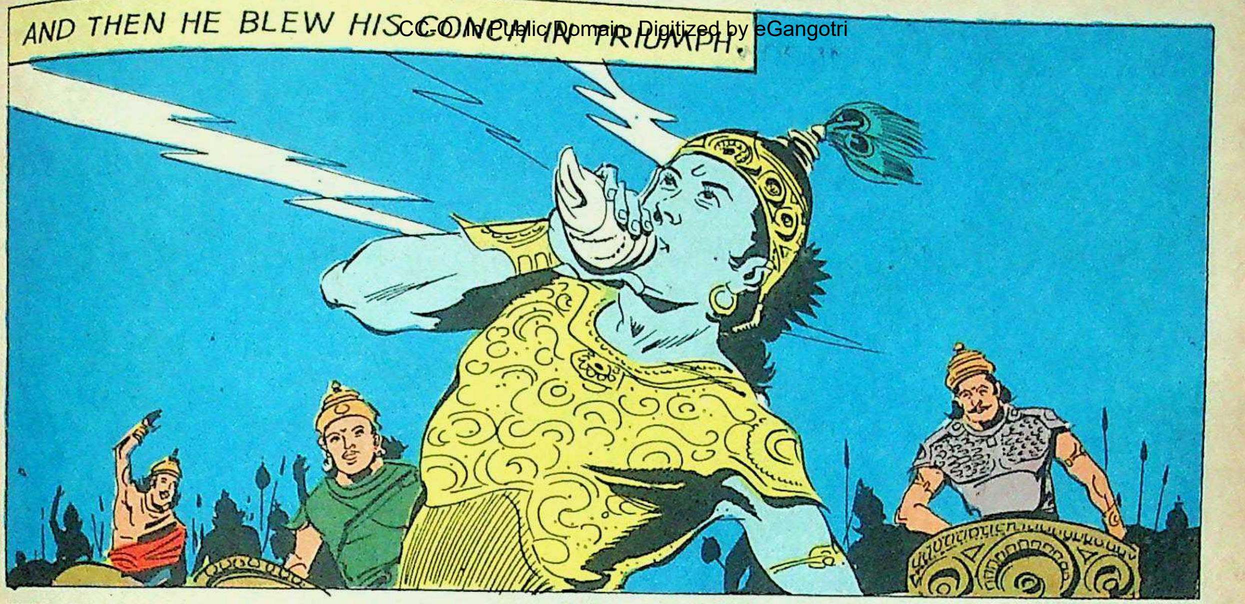




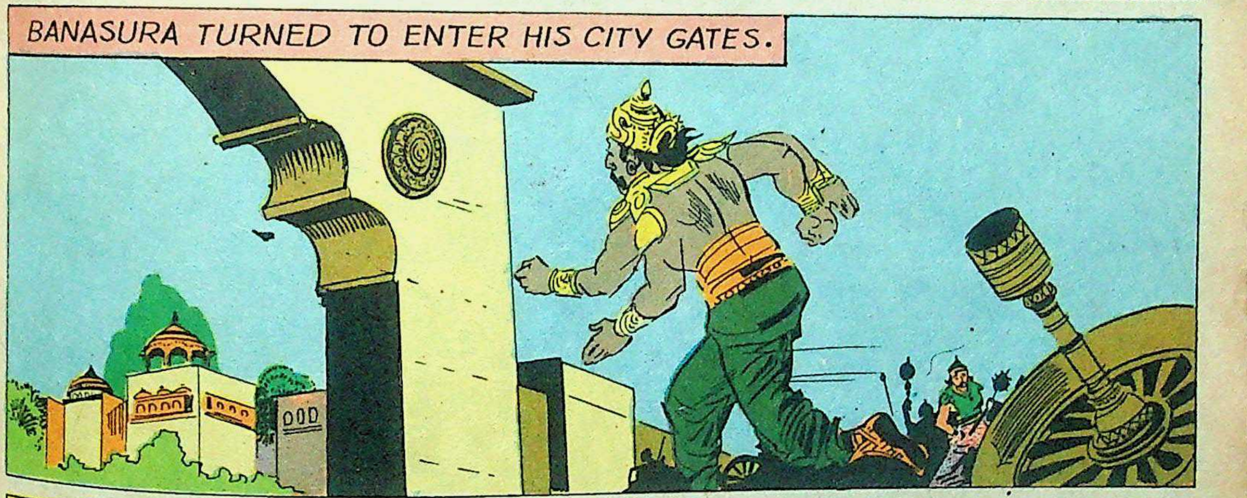
BUT KRISHNA WAS TOO QUICK FOR HIM. WITH HIS DISCUS HE CUT OFF NINE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SIX OF BANA'S ARMS, KILLED HIS CHARIOTEER AND HORSES, AND DESTROYED HIS CHARIOT.



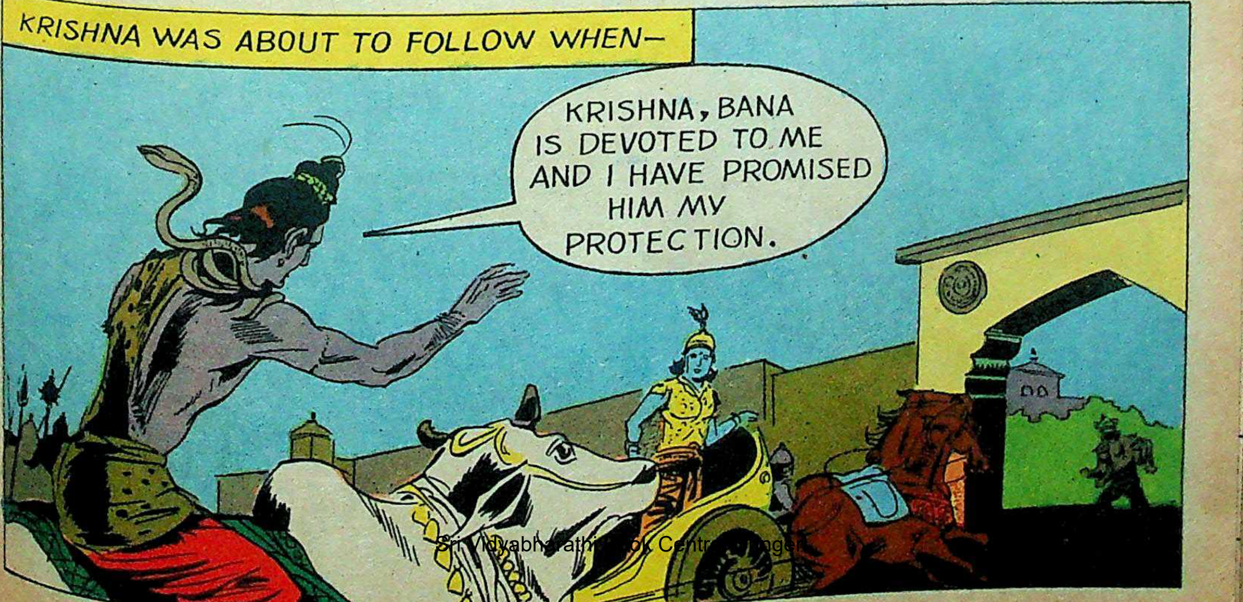
AND THEN HE BLEW HIS CONCH IN TRIUMPH.



BANASURA TURNED TO ENTER HIS CITY GATES.



KRISHNA WAS ABOUT TO FOLLOW WHEN–


KRISHNA, BANA IS DEVOTED TO ME AND I HAVE PROMISED HIM MY PROTECTION.

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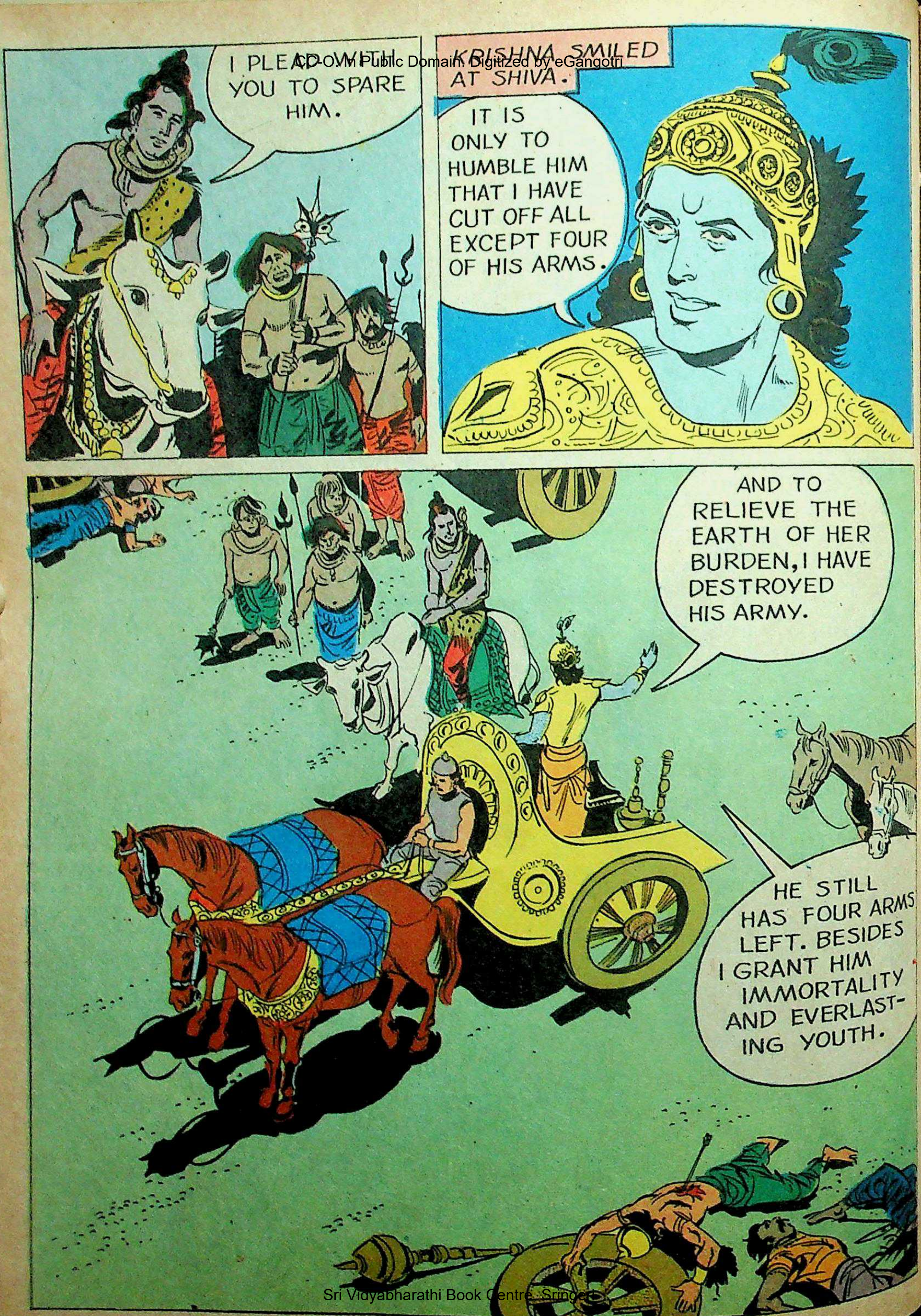
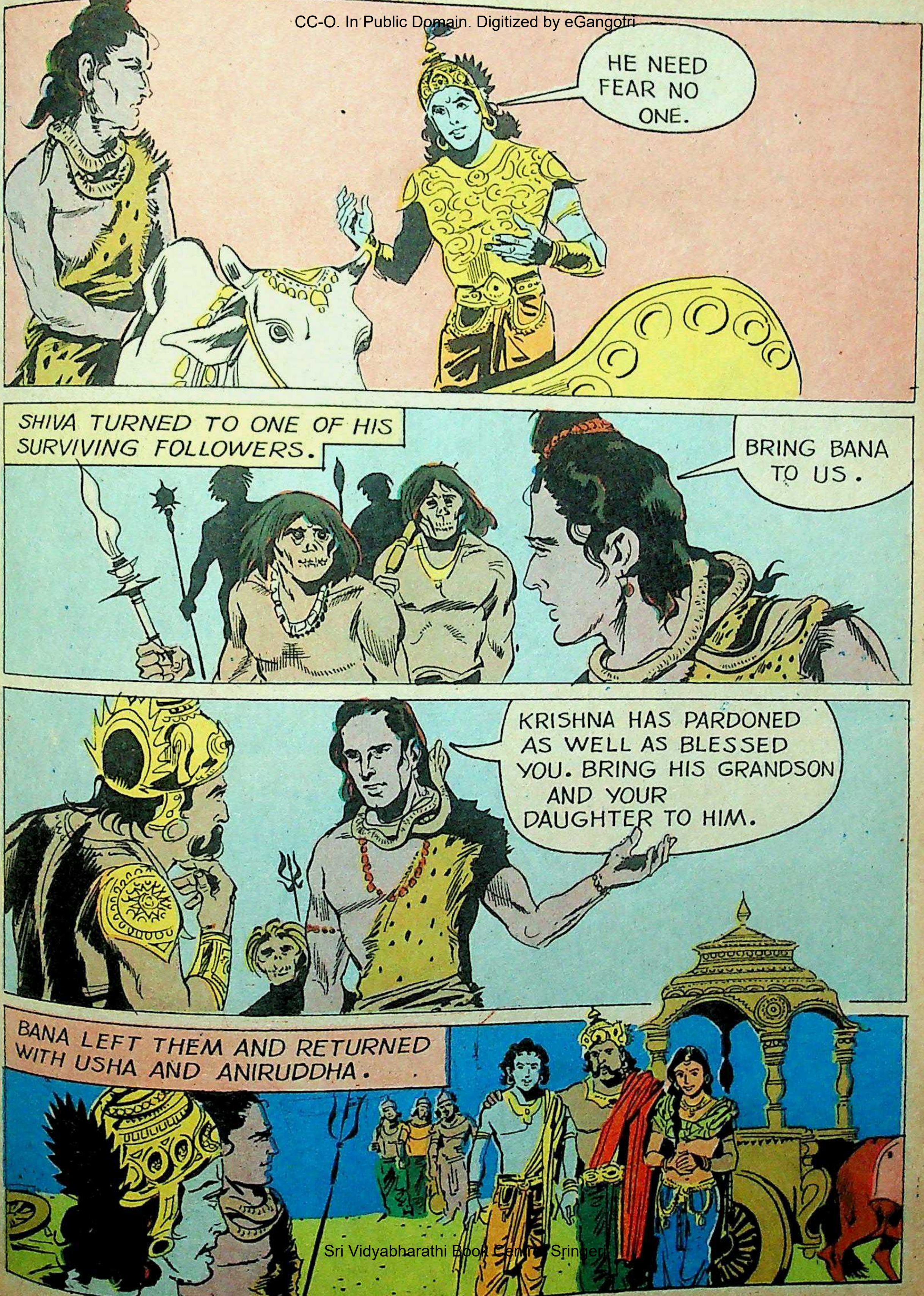
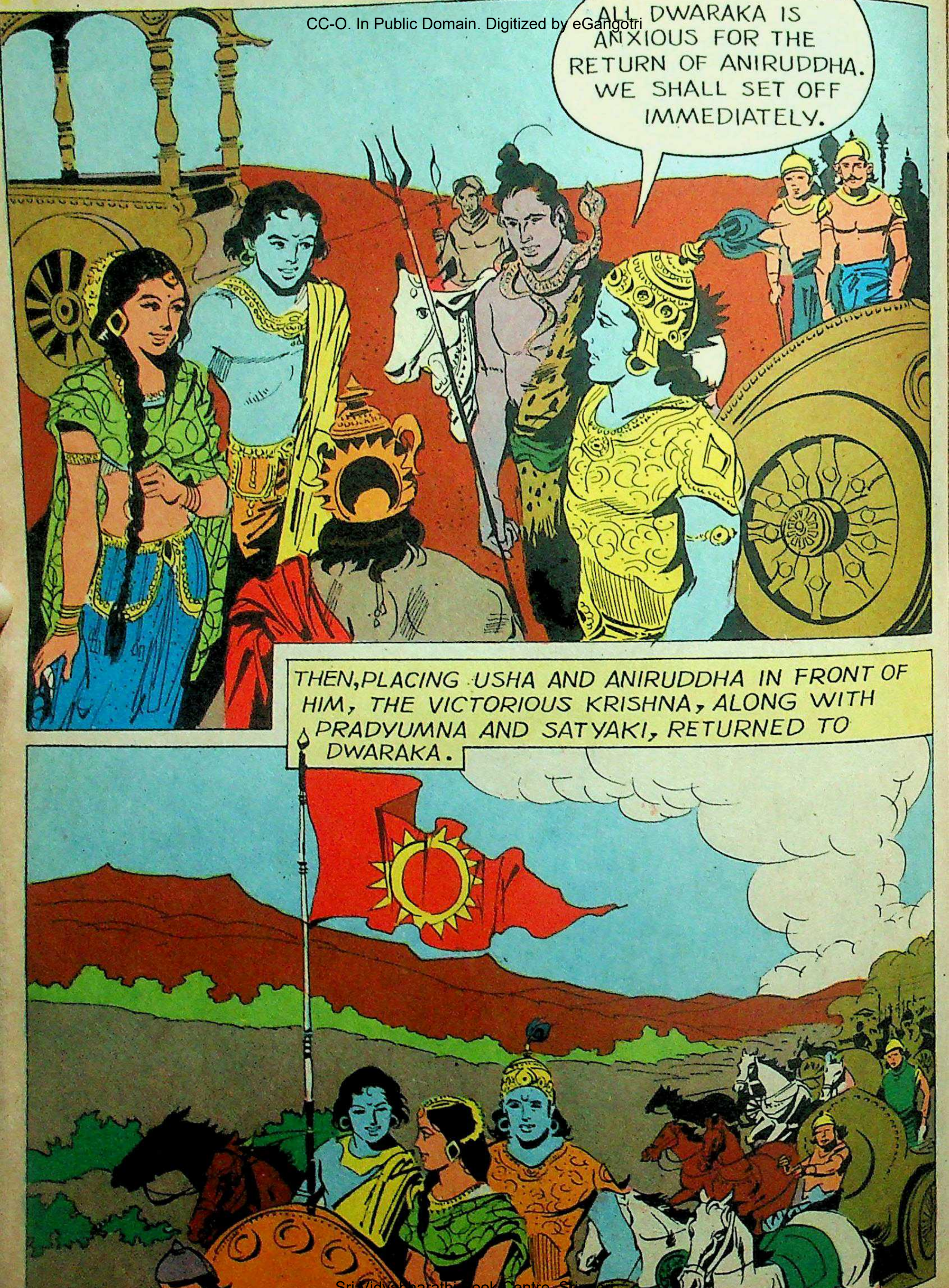
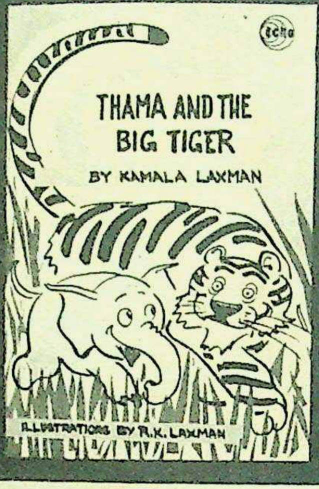

I PLEAD WITH YOU TO SPARE HIM.
KRISHNA SMILED AT SHIVA.
IT IS ONLY TO HUMBLE HIM THAT I HAVE CUT OFF ALL EXCEPT FOUR OF HIS ARMS.
AND TO RELIEVE THE EARTH OF HER BURDEN, I HAVE DESTROYED HIS ARMY.
HE STILL HAS FOUR ARMS LEFT. BESIDES I GRANT HIM IMMORTALITY AND EVERLASTING YOUTH.


HE NEED FEAR NO ONE.
SHIVA TURNED TO ONE OF HIS SURVIVING FOLLOWERS.
BRING BANA TO US.
KRISHNA HAS PARDONED AS WELL AS BLESSED YOU. BRING HIS GRANDSON AND YOUR DAUGHTER TO HIM.
BANA LEFT THEM AND RETURNED WITH USHA AND ANIRUDDHA.


ALL DWARAKA IS ANXIOUS FOR THE RETURN OF ANIRUDDHA. WE SHALL SET OFF IMMEDIATELY.
THEN, PLACING USHA AND ANIRUDDHA IN FRONT OF HIM, THE VICTORIOUS KRISHNA, ALONG WITH PRADYUMNA AND SATYAKI, RETURNED TO DWARAKA.

THE CHILD'S WORLD OF
THAMA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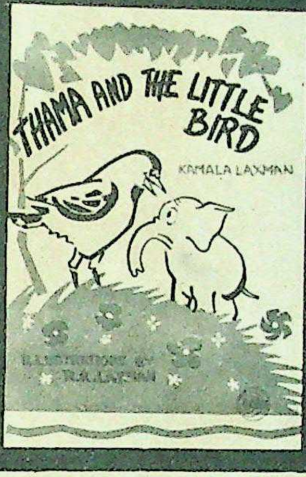
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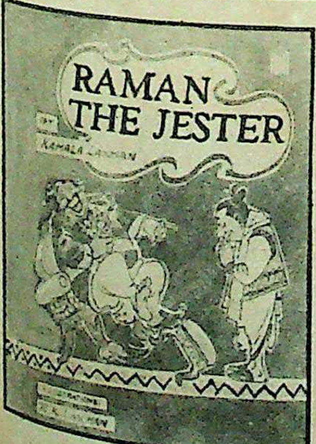
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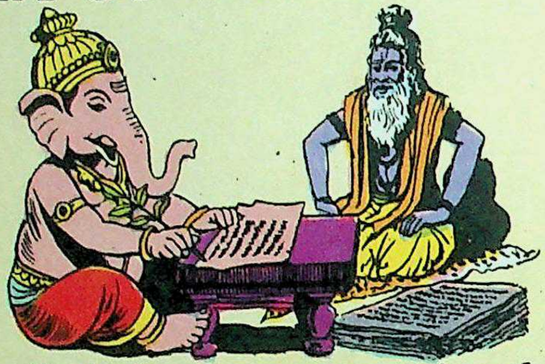

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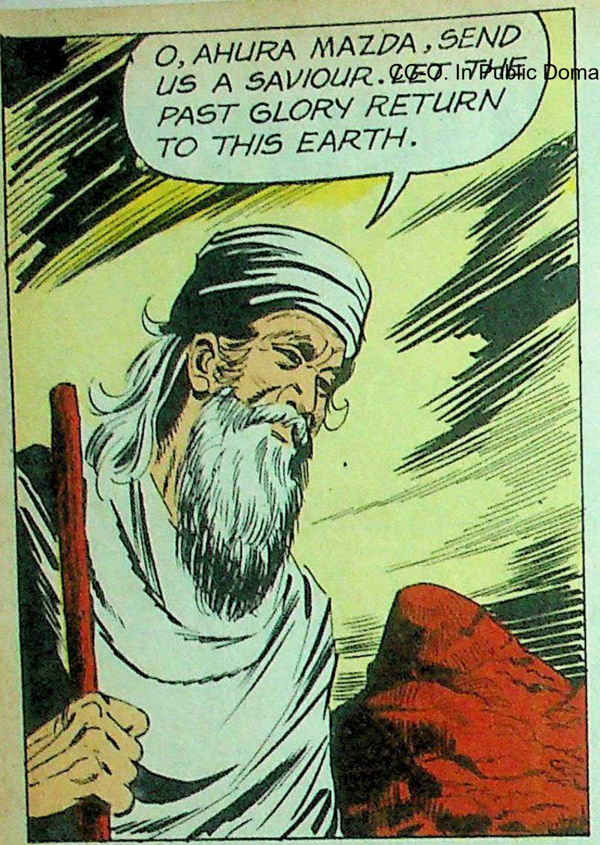
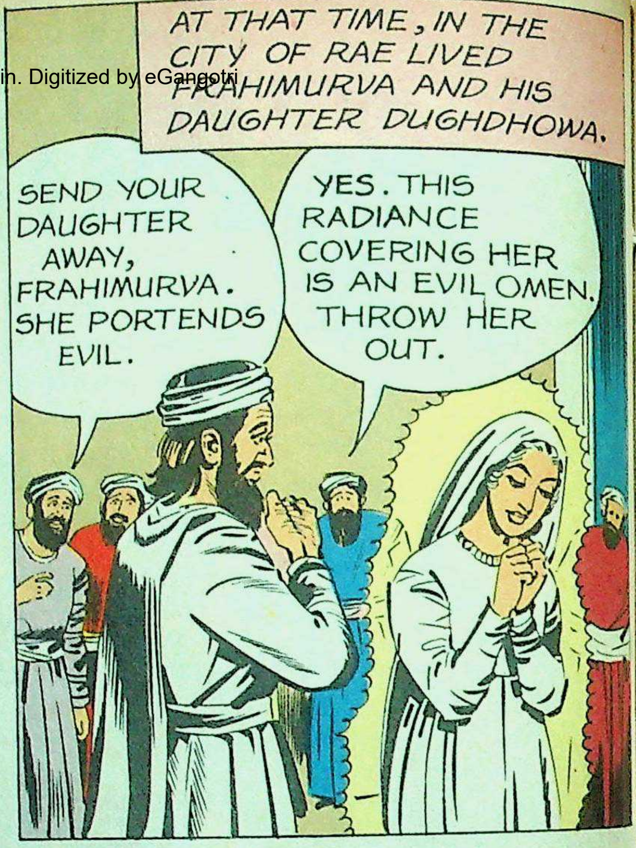
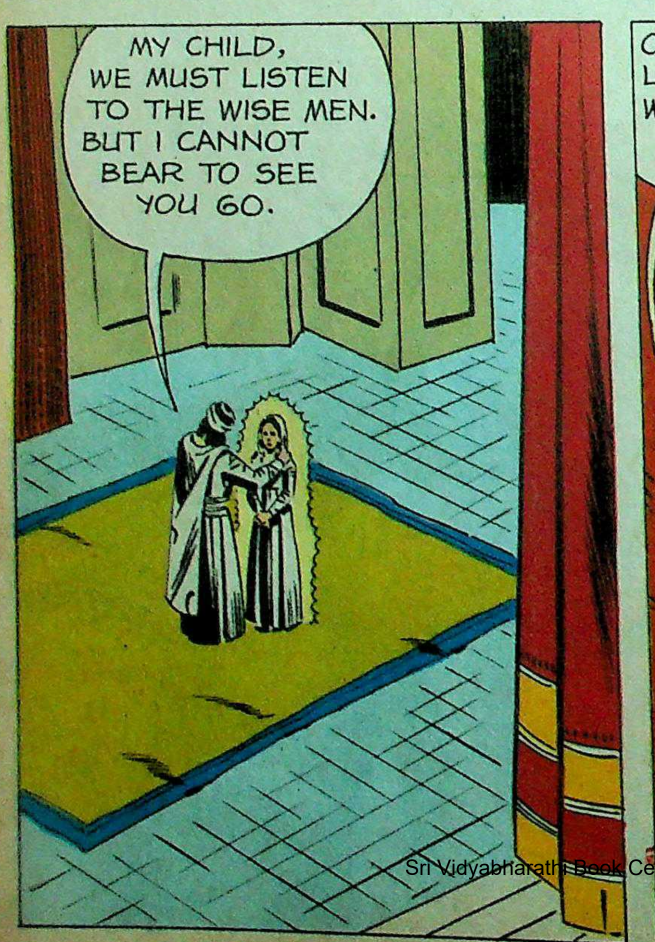
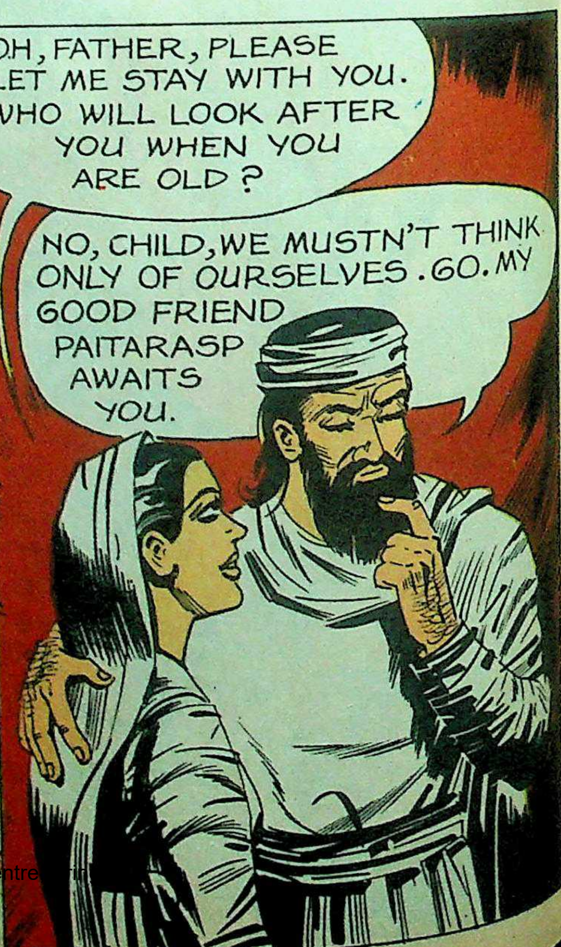
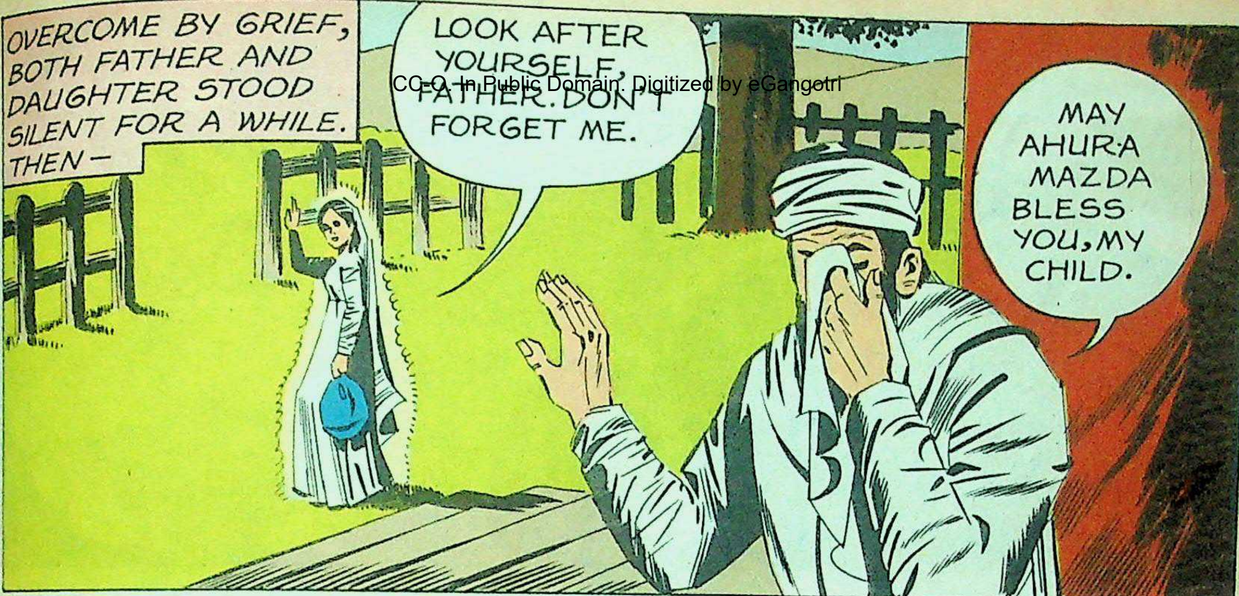
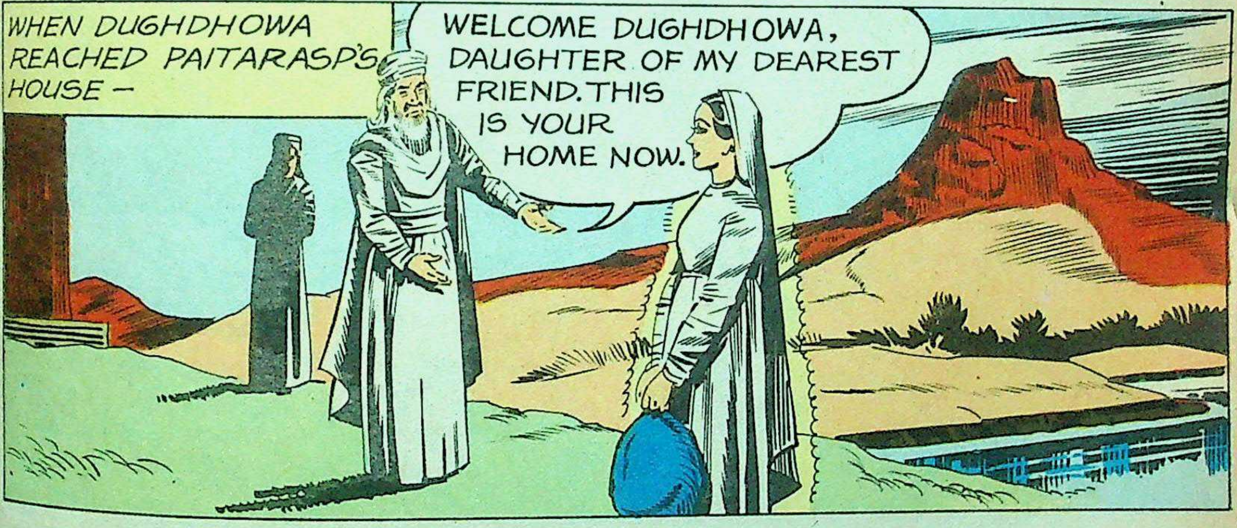

O, AHURA MAZDA, SEND US A SAVIOUR. LET THE PAST GLORY RETURN TO THIS EARTH.

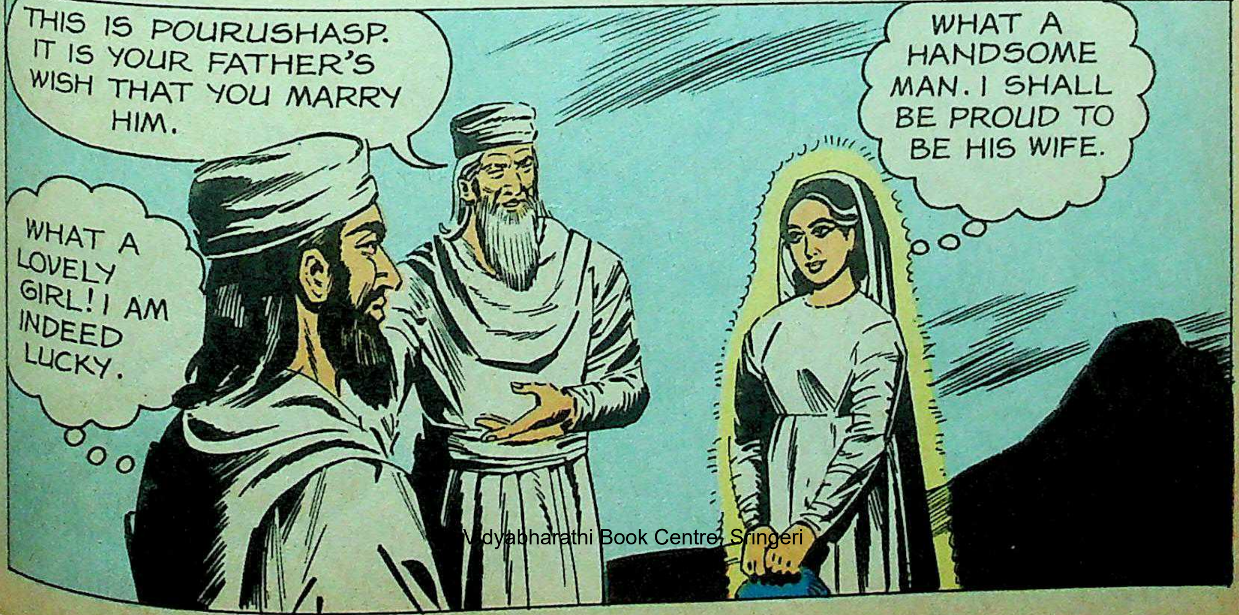

AT THAT TIME, IN THE CITY OF RAE LIVED FRAHIMURVA AND HIS DAUGHTER DUGHDHOWA.
SEND YOUR DAUGHTER AWAY, FRAHIMURVA. SHE PORTENDS EVIL.
YES. THIS RADIANCE COVERING HER IS AN EVIL OMEN. THROW HER OUT.

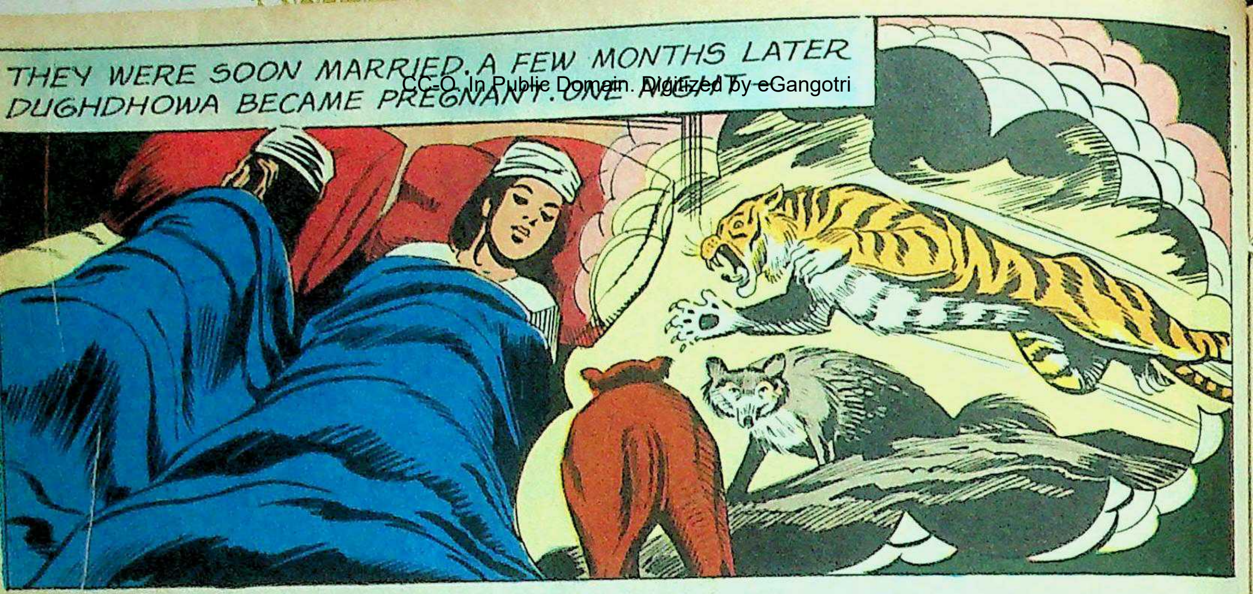

MY CHILD, WE MUST LISTEN TO THE WISE MEN. BUT I CANNOT BEAR TO SEE YOU GO.

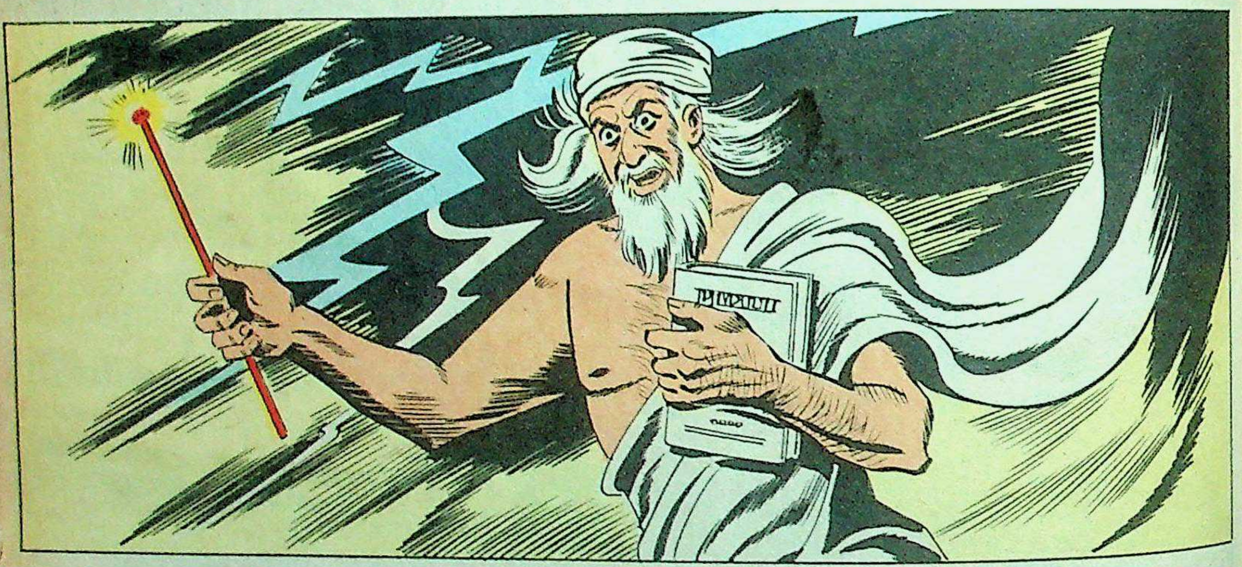

OH, FATHER, PLEASE LET ME STAY WITH YOU. WHO WILL LOOK AFTER YOU WHEN YOU ARE OLD?
NO, CHILD, WE MUSTN'T THINK ONLY OF OURSELVES. GO. MY GOOD FRIEND PAITARASP AWAITS YOU.

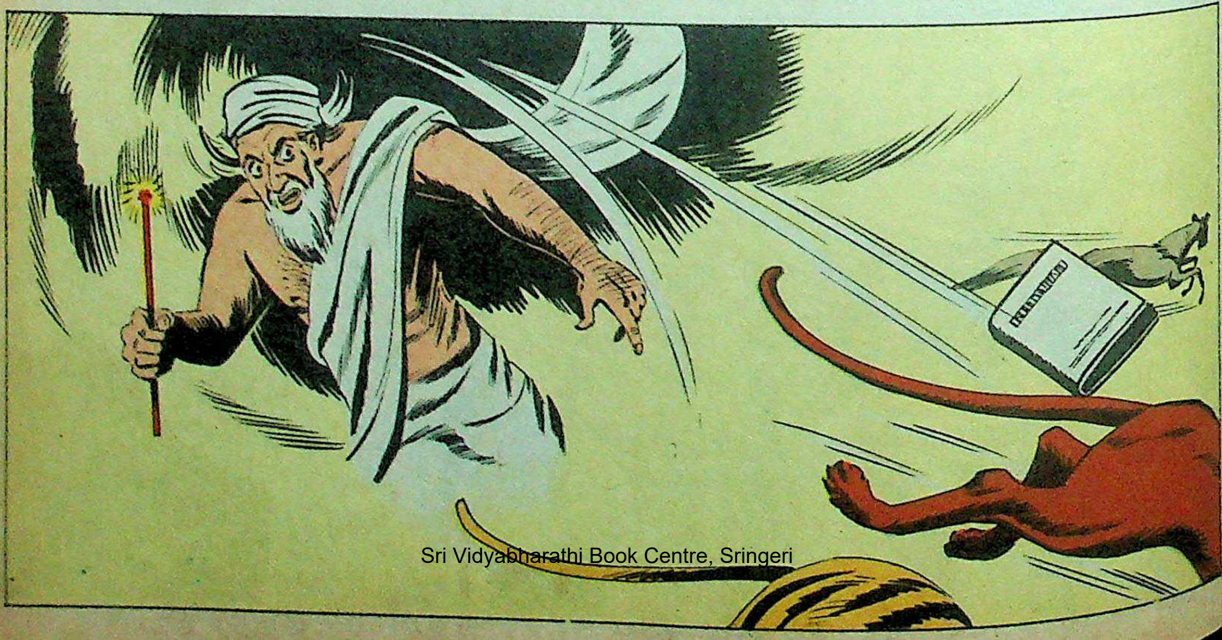

OVERCOME BY GRIEF, BOTH FATHER AND DAUGHTER STOOD SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN—
LOOK AFTER YOURSELF, FATHER. DON'T FORGET ME.
MAY AHURA MAZDA BLESS YOU, MY CHILD.

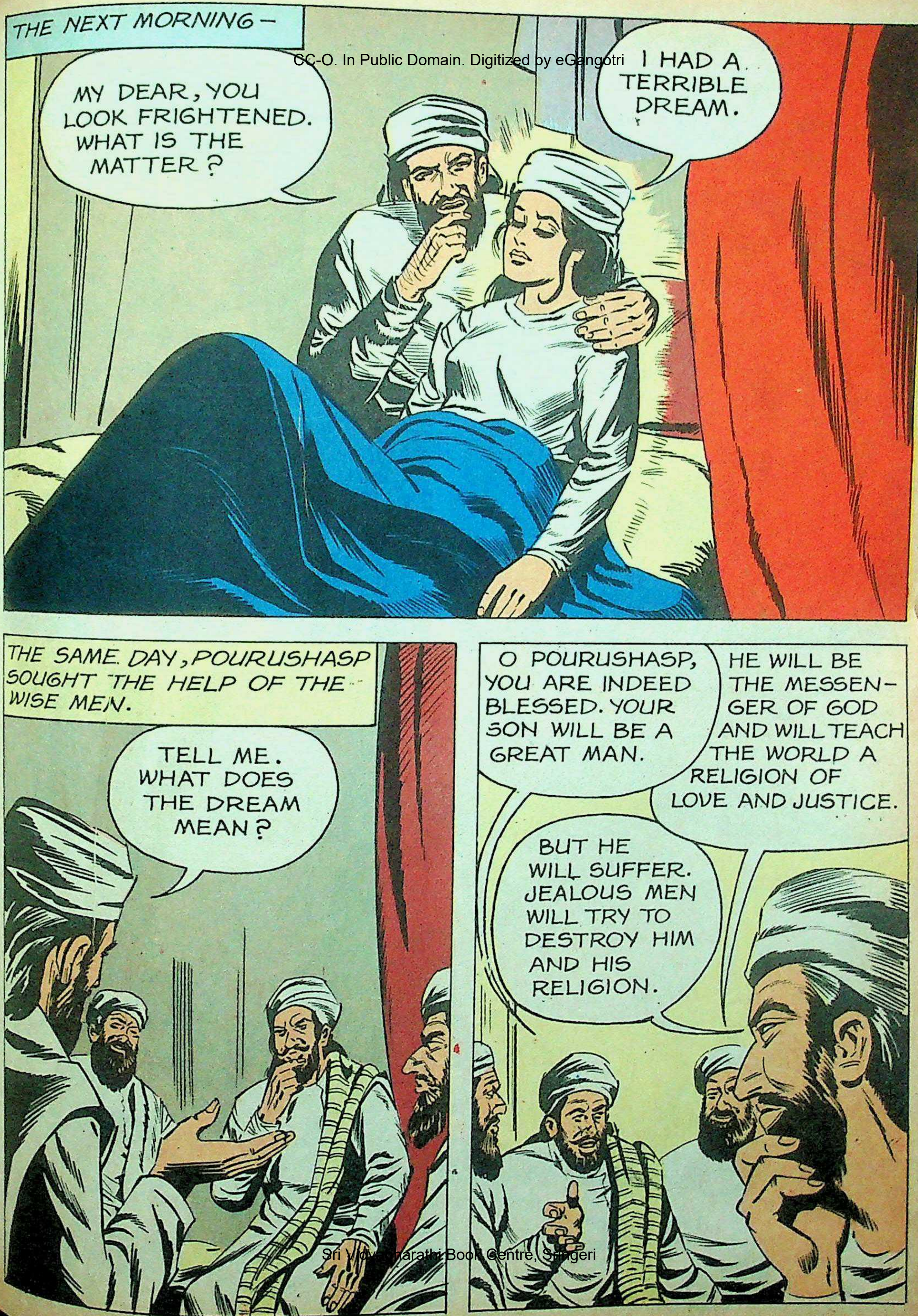

WHEN DUGHDHOWA REACHED PAITARASP'S HOUSE—
WELCOME DUGHDHOWA, DAUGHTER OF MY DEAREST FRIEND. THIS IS YOUR HOME NOW.

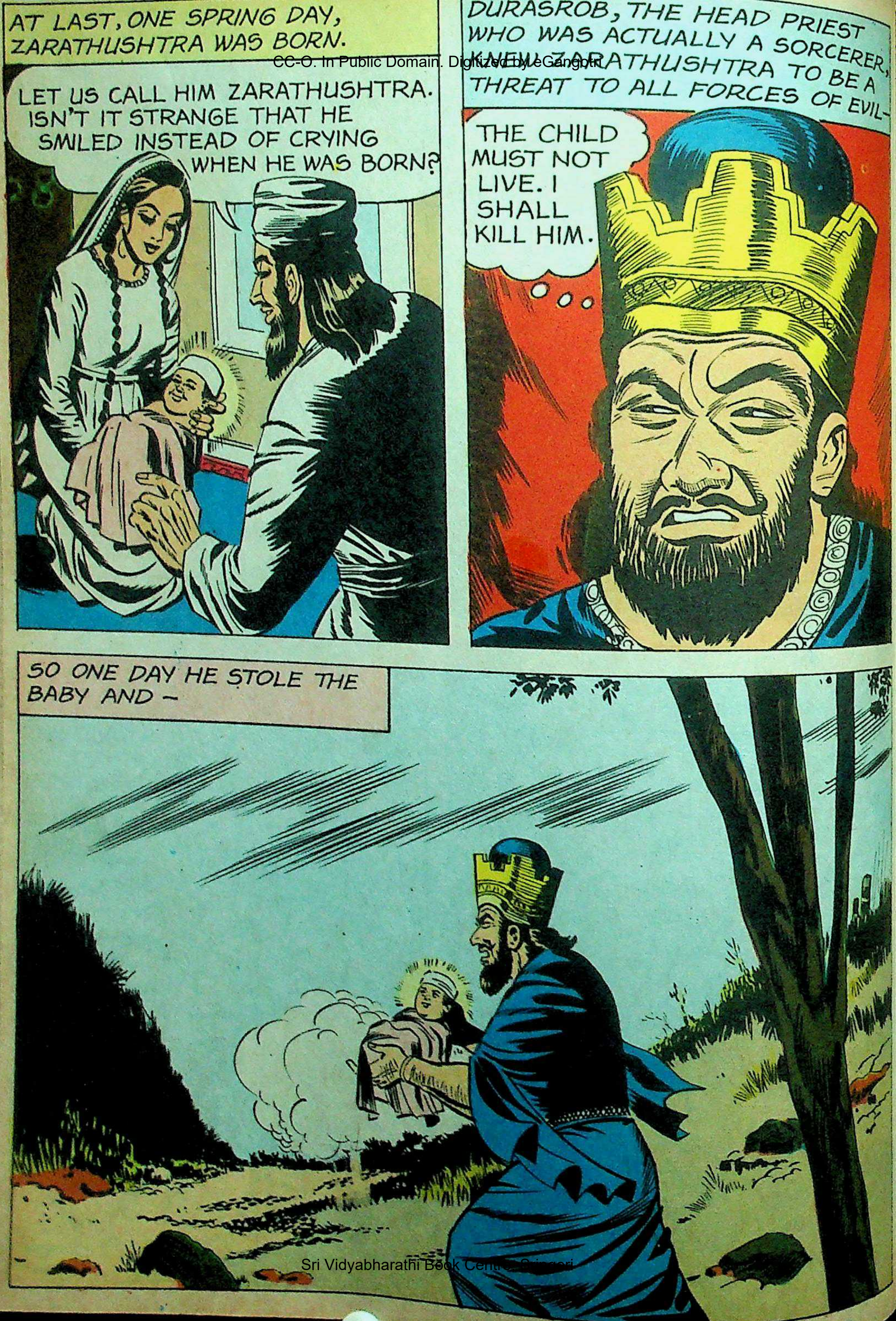

THIS IS POURUSHASP. IT IS YOUR FATHER'S WISH THAT YOU MARRY HIM.
WHAT A HANDSOME MAN. I SHALL BE PROUD TO BE HIS WIFE.
WHAT A LOVELY GIRL! I AM INDEED LUCKY.

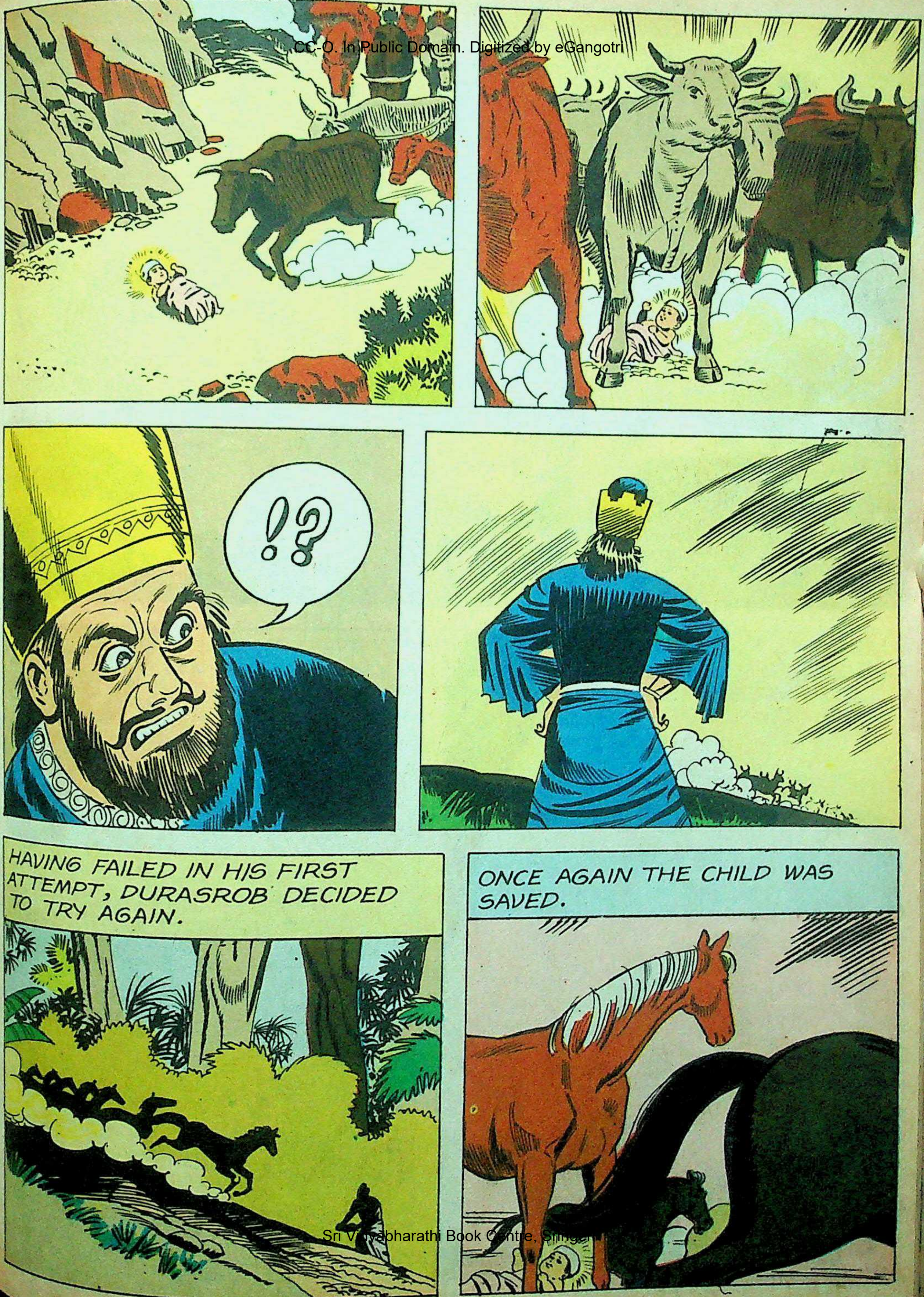

THEY WERE SOON MARRIED. A FEW MONTHS LATER DUGHDHOWA BECAME PREGNANT. ONE NIGHT






THE NEXT MORNING –
MY DEAR, YOU LOOK FRIGHTENED. WHAT IS THE MATTER?
I HAD A TERRIBLE DREAM.
THE SAME DAY, POURUSHASP SOUGHT THE HELP OF THE WISE MEN.
TELL ME. WHAT DOES THE DREAM MEAN?
O POURUSHASP, YOU ARE INDEED BLESSED. YOUR SON WILL BE A GREAT MAN.
HE WILL BE THE MESSENGER OF GOD AND WILL TEACH THE WORLD A RELIGION OF LOVE AND JUSTICE.
BUT HE WILL SUFFER. JEALOUS MEN WILL TRY TO DESTROY HIM AND HIS RELIGION.


AT LAST, ONE SPRING DAY, ZARATHUSHTRA WAS BORN.
LET US CALL HIM ZARATHUSHTRA. ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT HE SMILED INSTEAD OF CRYING WHEN HE WAS BORN?
DURASROB, THE HEAD PRIEST WHO WAS ACTUALLY A SORCERER, KNEW ZARATHUSHTRA TO BE A THREAT TO ALL FORCES OF EVIL–
THE CHILD MUST NOT LIVE. I SHALL KILL HIM.
SO ONE DAY HE STOLE THE BABY AND –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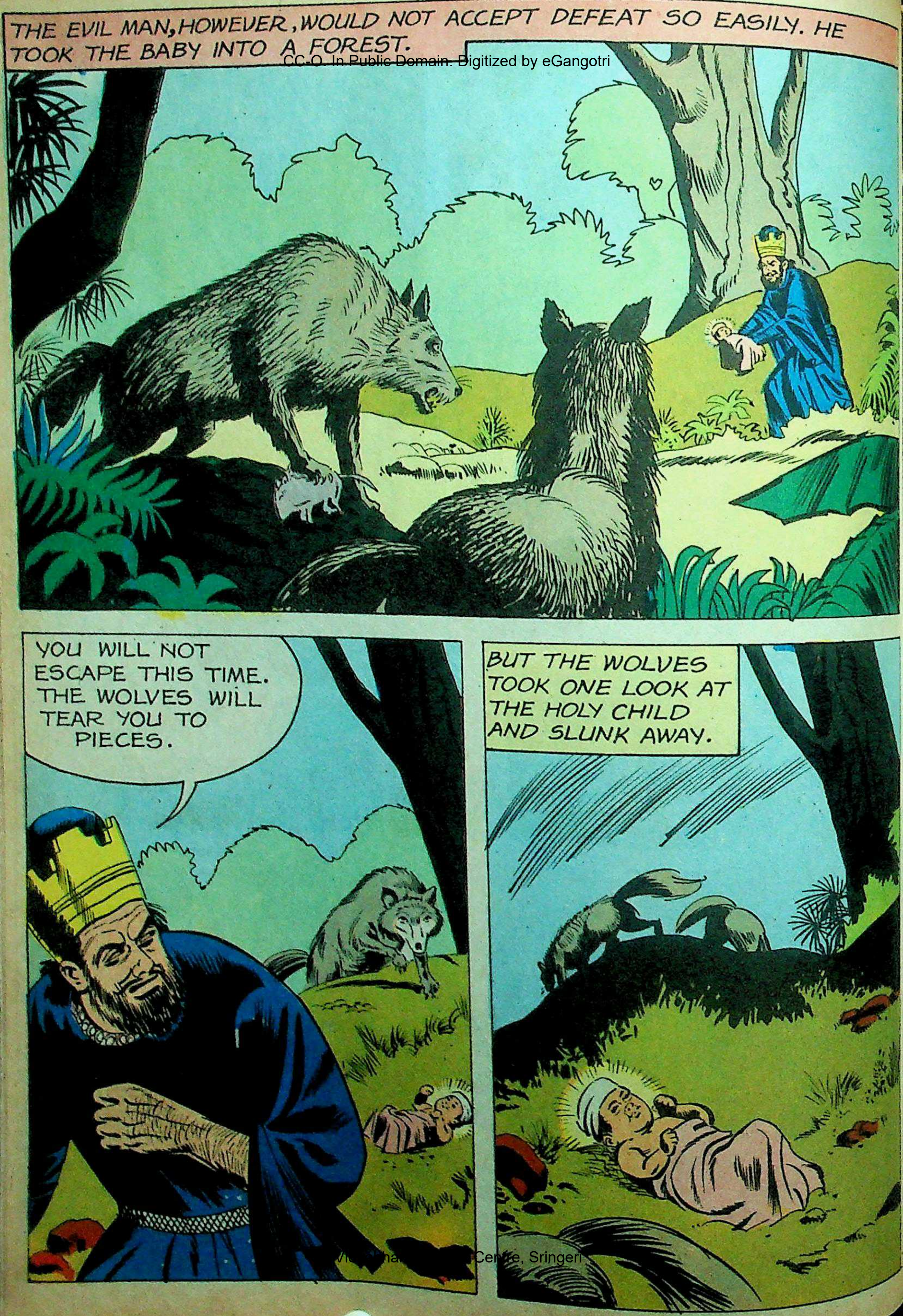
HAVING FAILED IN HIS FIRST ATTEMPT, DURASROB DECIDED TO TRY AGAIN.
ONCE AGAIN THE CHILD WAS SAVED.


THE EVIL MAN, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT ACCEPT DEFEAT SO EASILY. HE TOOK THE BABY INTO A FOREST.
YOU WILL NOT ESCAPE THIS TIME. THE WOLVES WILL TEAR YOU TO PIECES.
BUT THE WOLVES TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE HOLY CHILD AND SLUNK AWAY.

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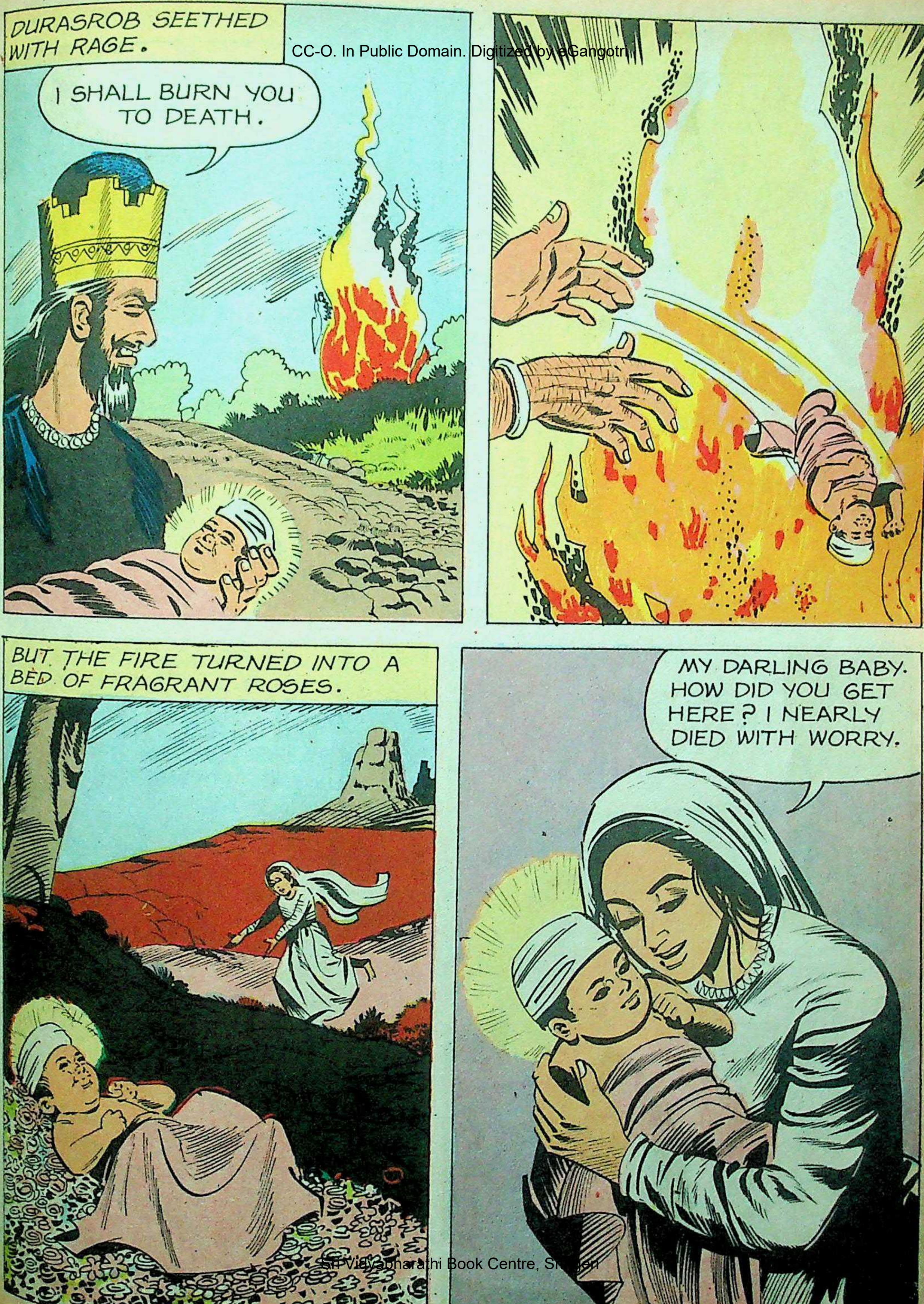
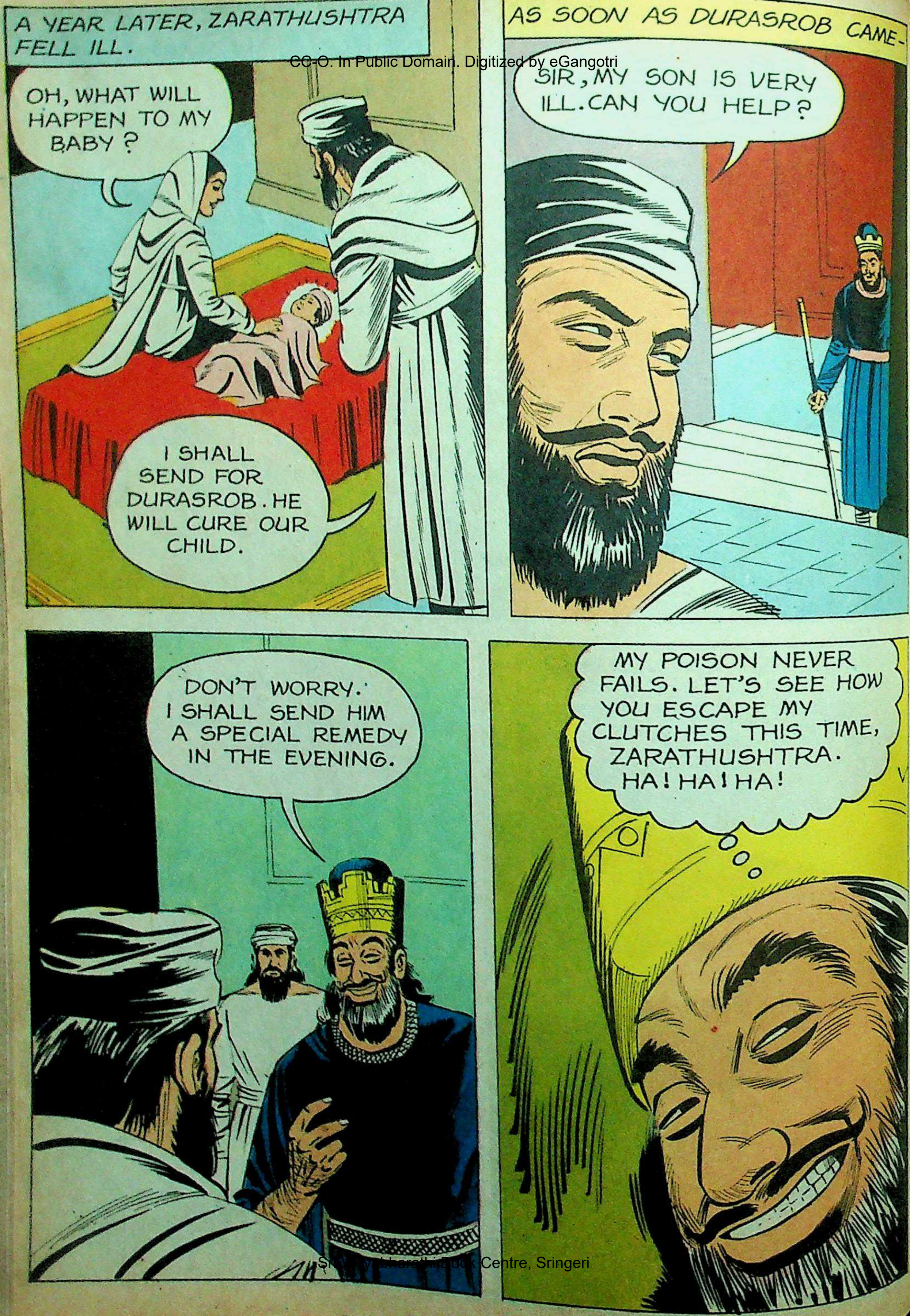

DURASROB SEETHED WITH RAGE.
I SHALL BURN YOU TO DEATH.
BUT THE FIRE TURNED INTO A BED OF FRAGRANT ROSES.
MY DARLING BABY. HOW DID YOU GET HERE? I NEARLY DIED WITH WORRY.


A YEAR LATER, ZARATHUSHTRA FELL ILL.
OH, WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY BABY ?
I SHALL SEND FOR DURASROB. HE WILL CURE OUR CHILD.
AS SOON AS DURASROB CAME-
SIR, MY SON IS VERY ILL. CAN YOU HELP ?
DON'T WORRY. I SHALL SEND HIM A SPECIAL REMEDY IN THE EVENING.
MY POISON NEVER FAILS. LET'S SEE HOW YOU ESCAPE MY CLUTCHES THIS TIME, ZARATHUSHTRA. HA! HA! HA!

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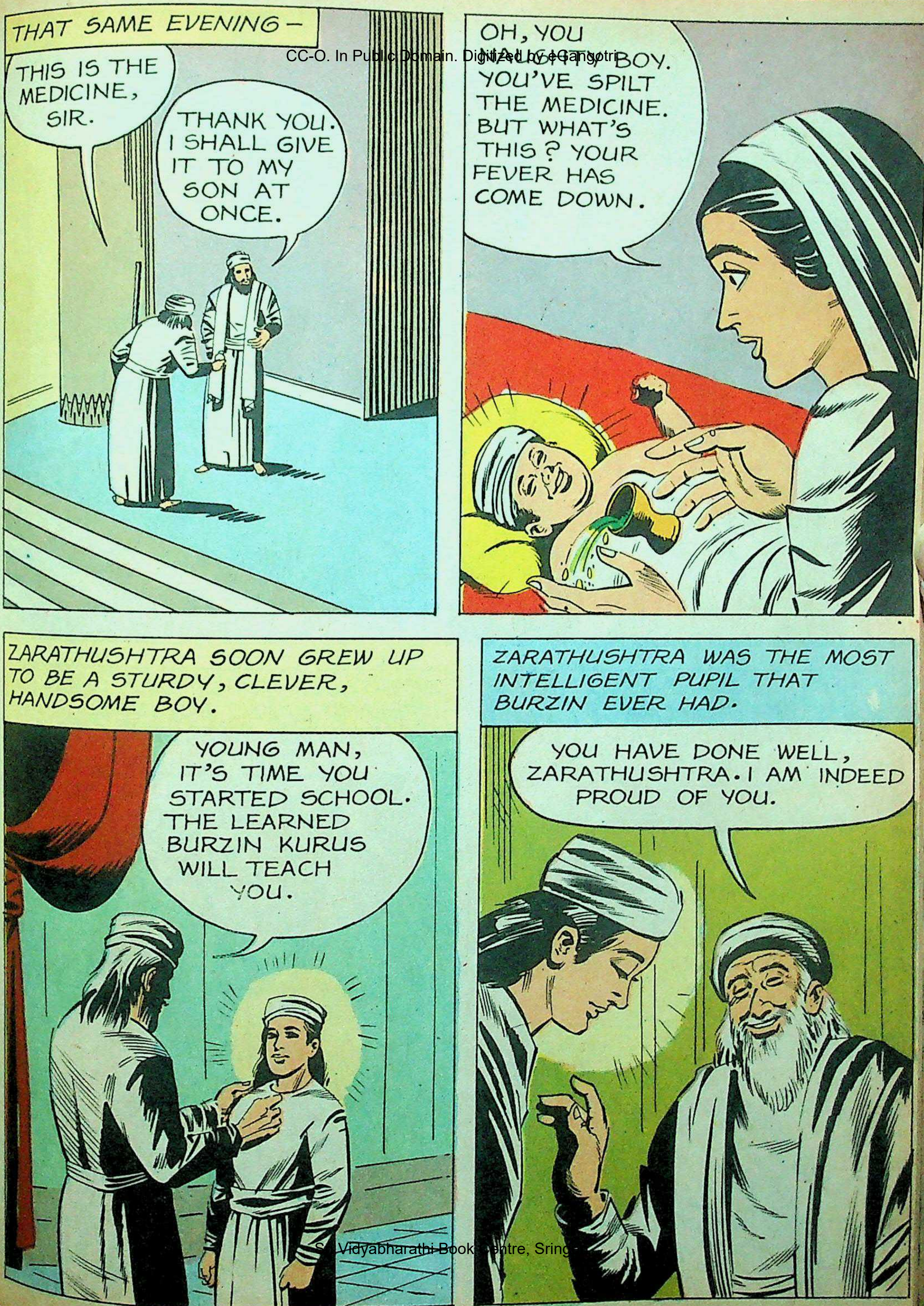
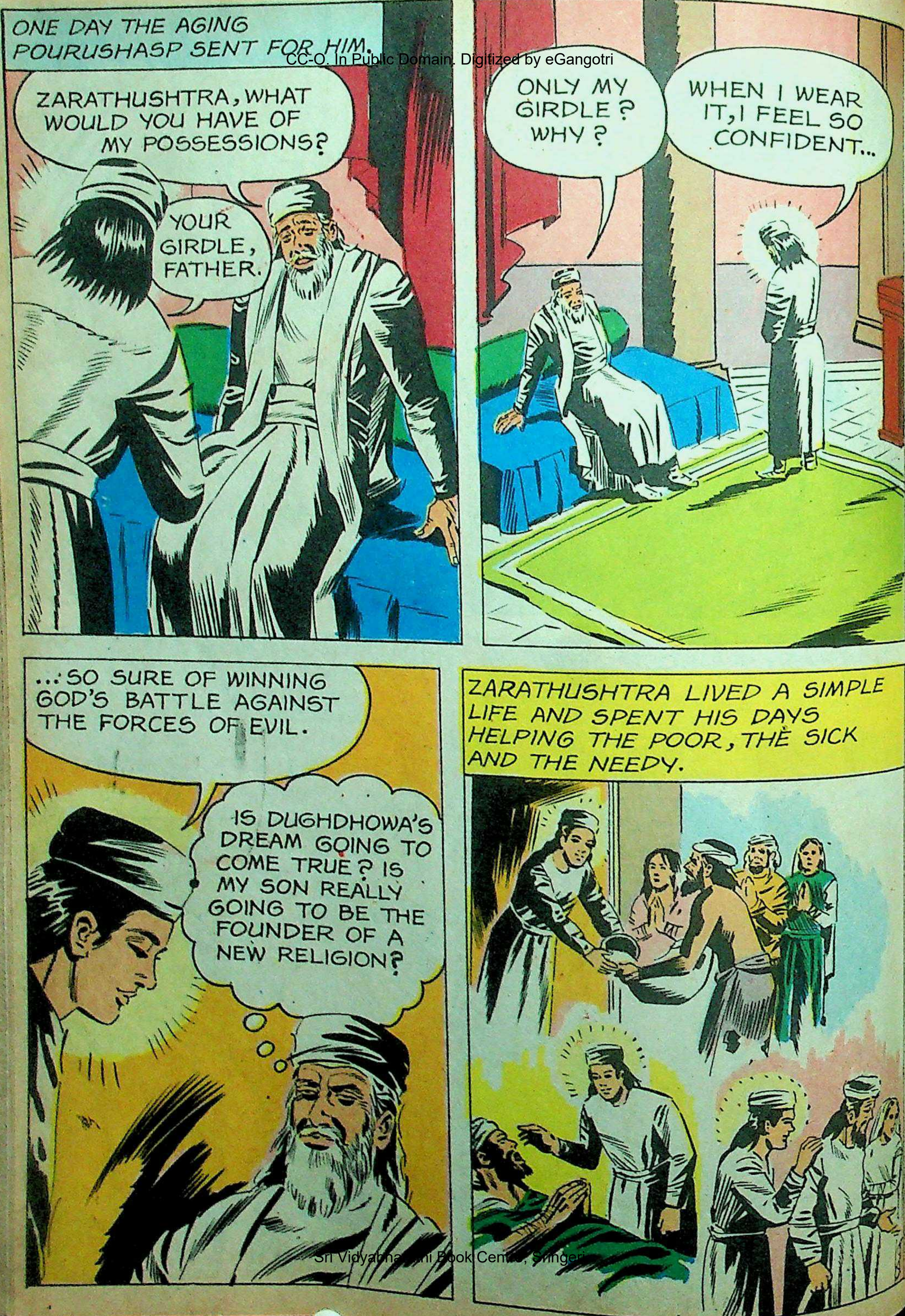
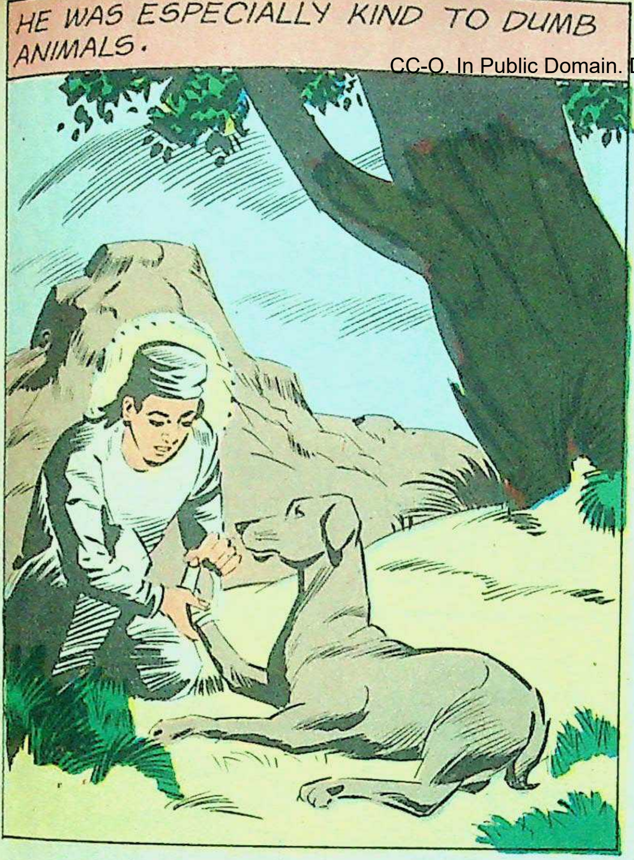
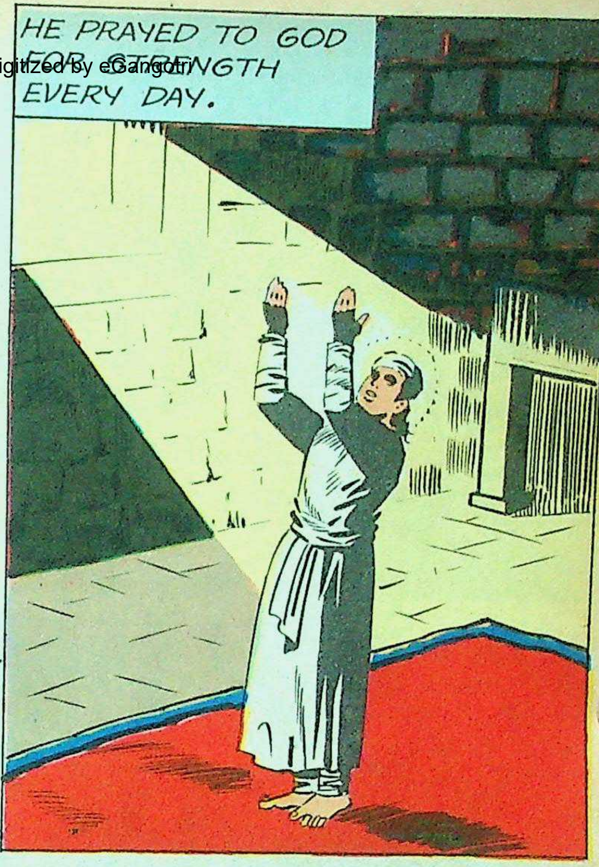
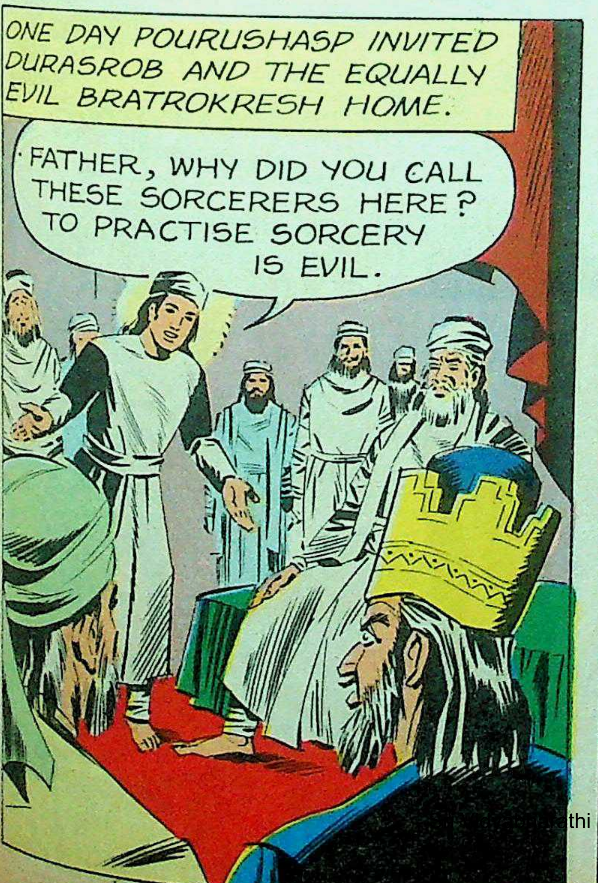
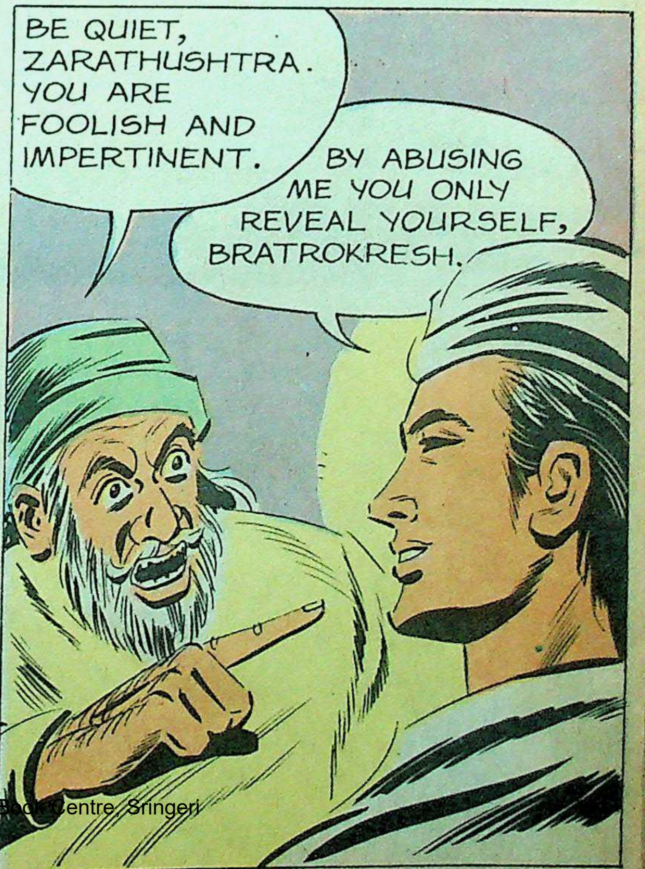

THAT SAME EVENING –
THIS IS THE MEDICINE, SIR.
THANK YOU. I SHALL GIVE IT TO MY SON AT ONCE.
OH, YOU NAUGHTY BOY. YOU'VE SPILT THE MEDICINE. BUT WHAT'S THIS? YOUR FEVER HAS COME DOWN.
ZARATHUSHTRA SOON GREW UP TO BE A STURDY, CLEVER, HANDSOME BOY.
YOUNG MAN, IT'S TIME YOU STARTED SCHOOL. THE LEARNED BURZIN KURUS WILL TEACH YOU.
ZARATHUSHTRA WAS THE MOST INTELLIGENT PUPIL THAT BURZIN EVER HAD.
YOU HAVE DONE WELL, ZARATHUSHTRA. I AM INDEED PROUD OF YOU.

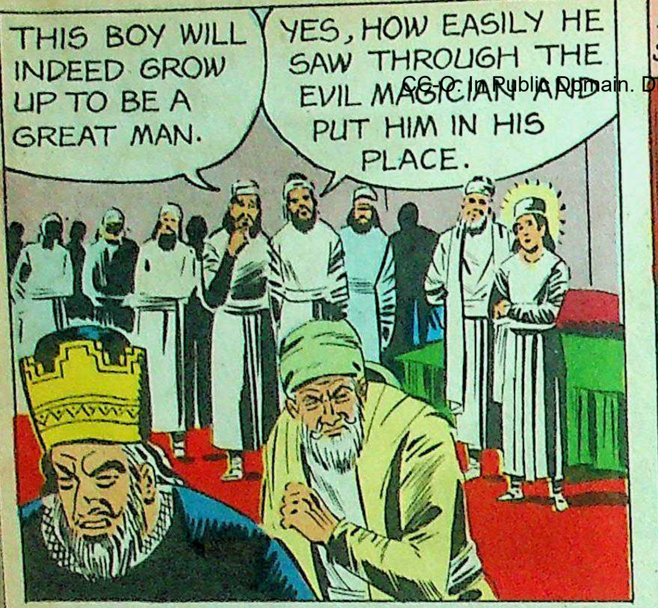

ONE DAY THE AGING POURUSHASP SENT FOR HIM.
ZARATHUSHTRA, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE OF MY POSSESSIONS?
YOUR GIRDLE, FATHER.
ONLY MY GIRDLE? WHY?
WHEN I WEAR IT, I FEEL SO CONFIDENT...
...SO SURE OF WINNING GOD'S BATTLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF EVIL.
IS DUGHDHOWA'S DREAM GOING TO COME TRUE? IS MY SON REALLY GOING TO BE THE FOUNDER OF A NEW RELIGION?
ZARATHUSHTRA LIVED A SIMPLE LIFE AND SPENT HIS DAYS HELPING THE POOR, THE SICK AND THE NEEDY.

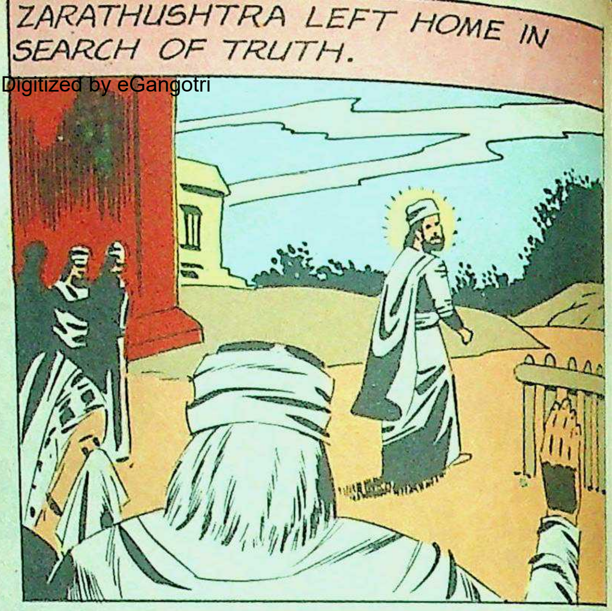

HE WAS ESPECIALLY KIND TO DUMB ANIMALS.

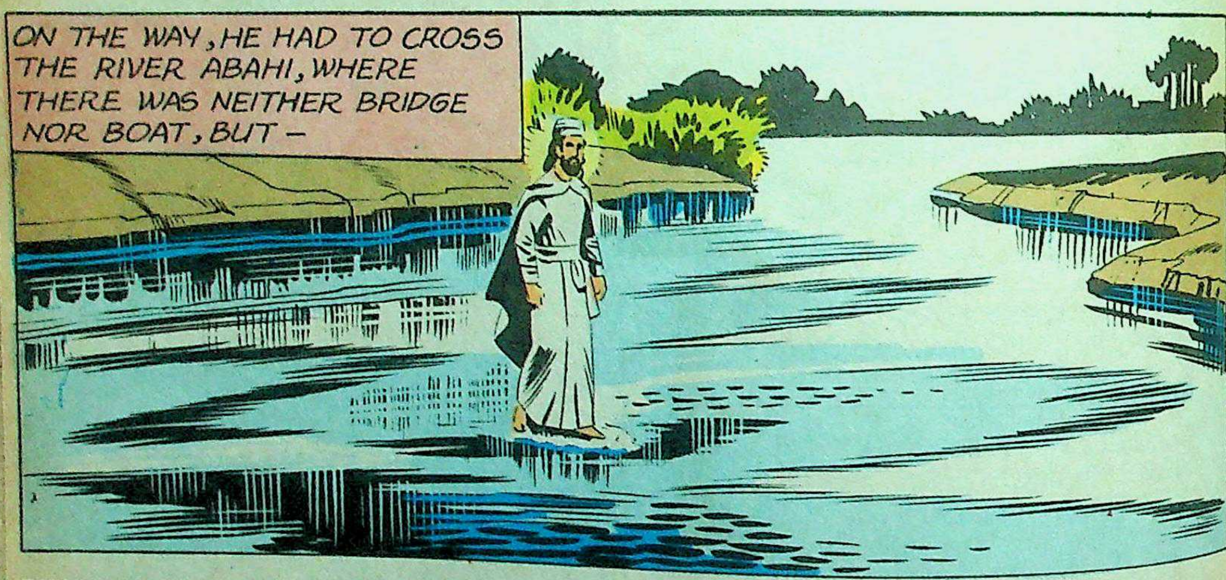

HE PRAYED TO GOD FOR STRENGTH EVERY DAY.

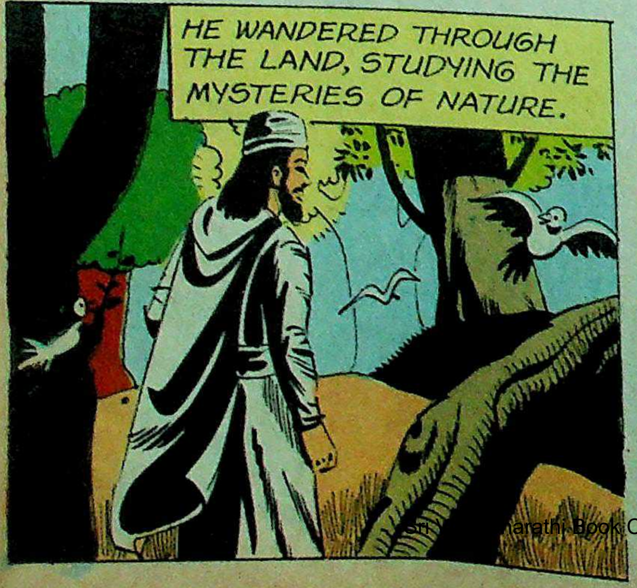

ONE DAY POURUSHASP INVITED DURASROB AND THE EQUALLY EVIL BRATROKRESH HOME.
FATHER, WHY DID YOU CALL THESE SORCERERS HERE? TO PRACTISE SORCERY IS EVIL.

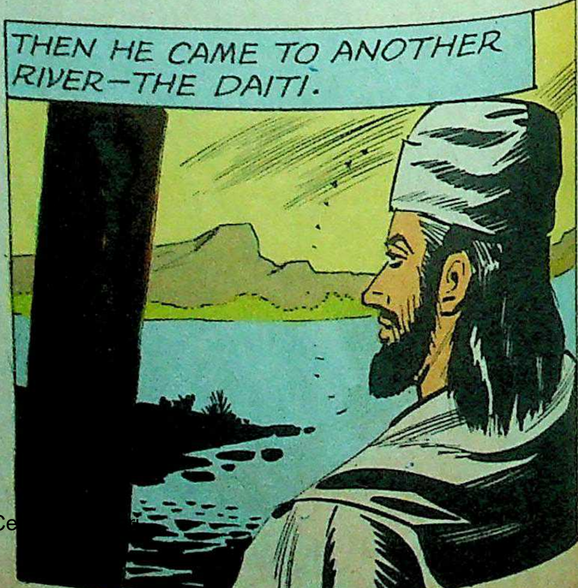

BE QUIET, ZARATHUSHTRA. YOU ARE FOOLISH AND IMPERTINENT.
BY ABUSING ME YOU ONLY REVEAL YOURSELF, BRATROKRESH.


THIS BOY WILL INDEED GROW UP TO BE A GREAT MAN.
YES, HOW EASILY HE SAW THROUGH THE EVIL MAGICIAN AND PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE.


ZARATHUSHTRA LEFT HOME IN SEARCH OF TRUTH.


ON THE WAY, HE HAD TO CROSS THE RIVER ABAHI, WHERE THERE WAS NEITHER BRIDGE NOR BOAT, BUT –


HE WANDERED THROUGH THE LAND, STUDYING THE MYSTERIES OF NATURE.


THEN HE CAME TO ANOTHER RIVER—THE DAITI.

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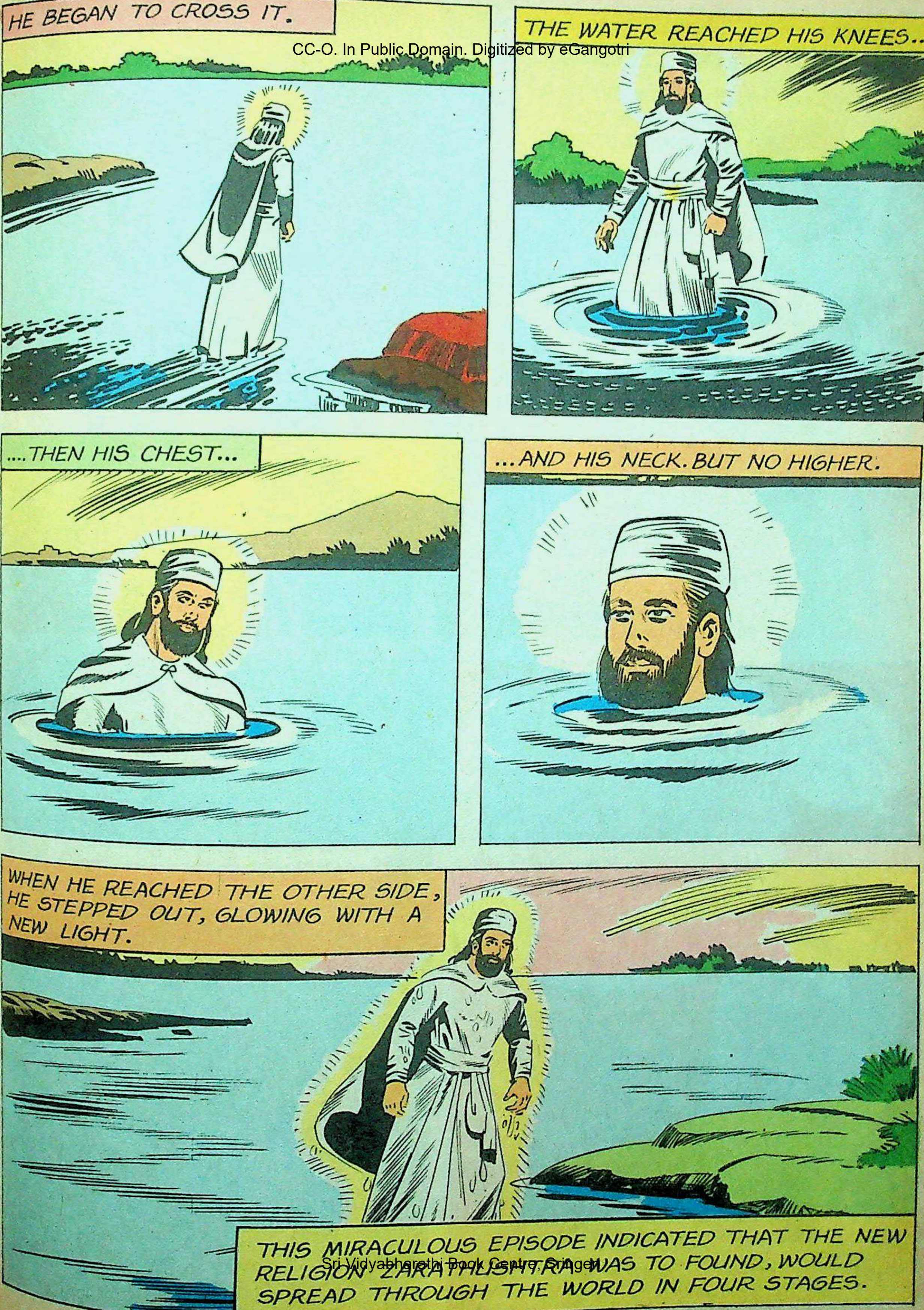
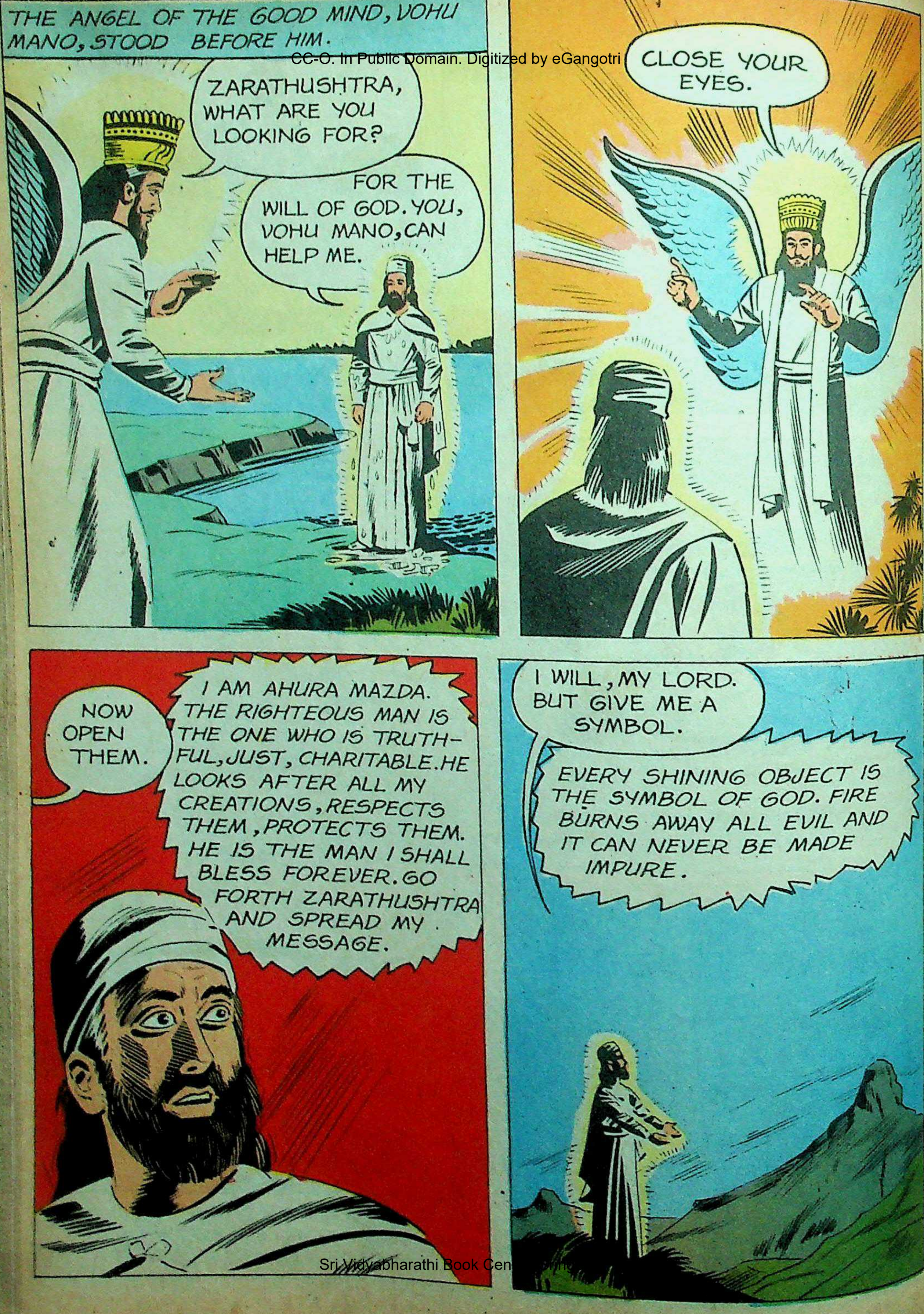
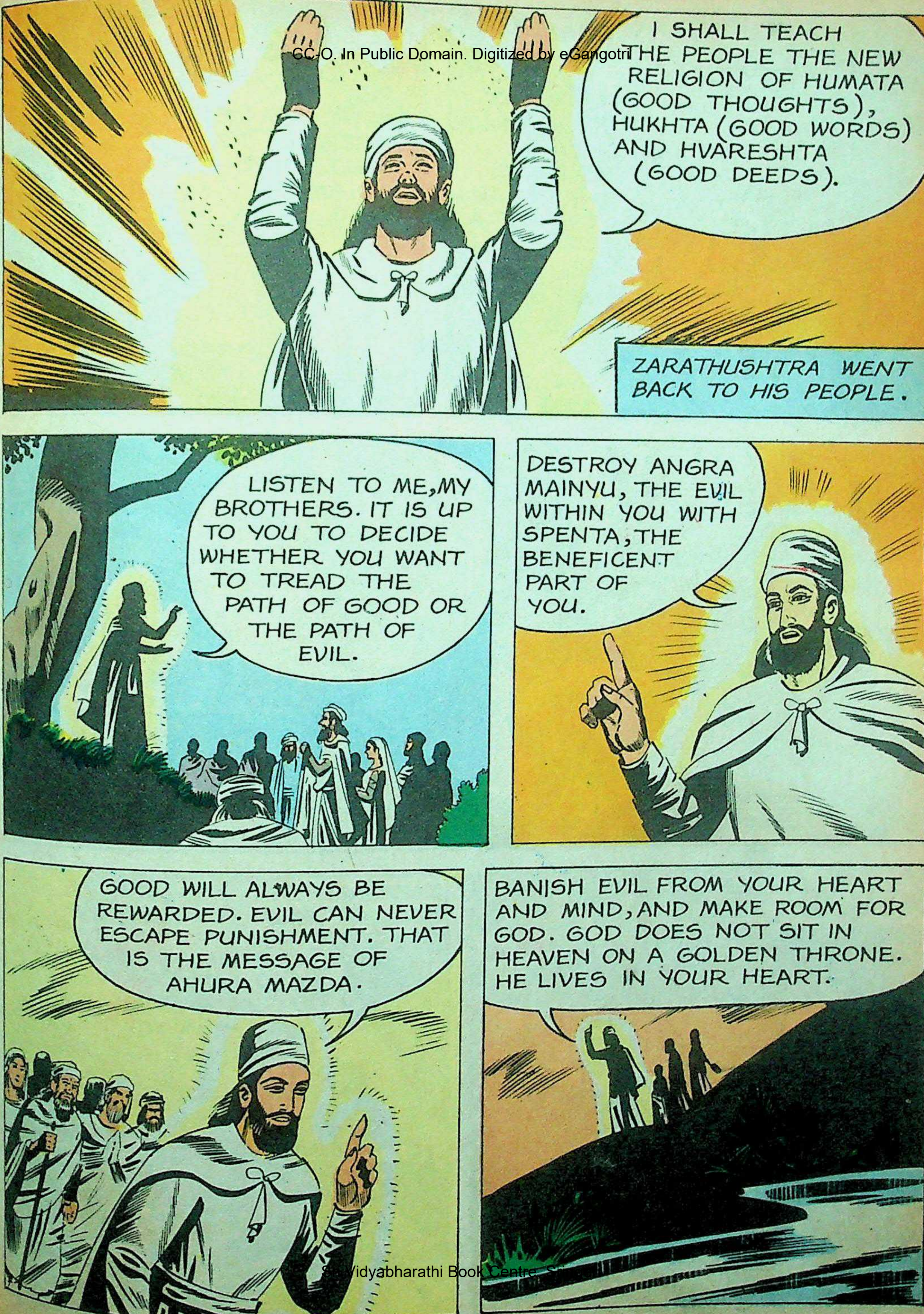
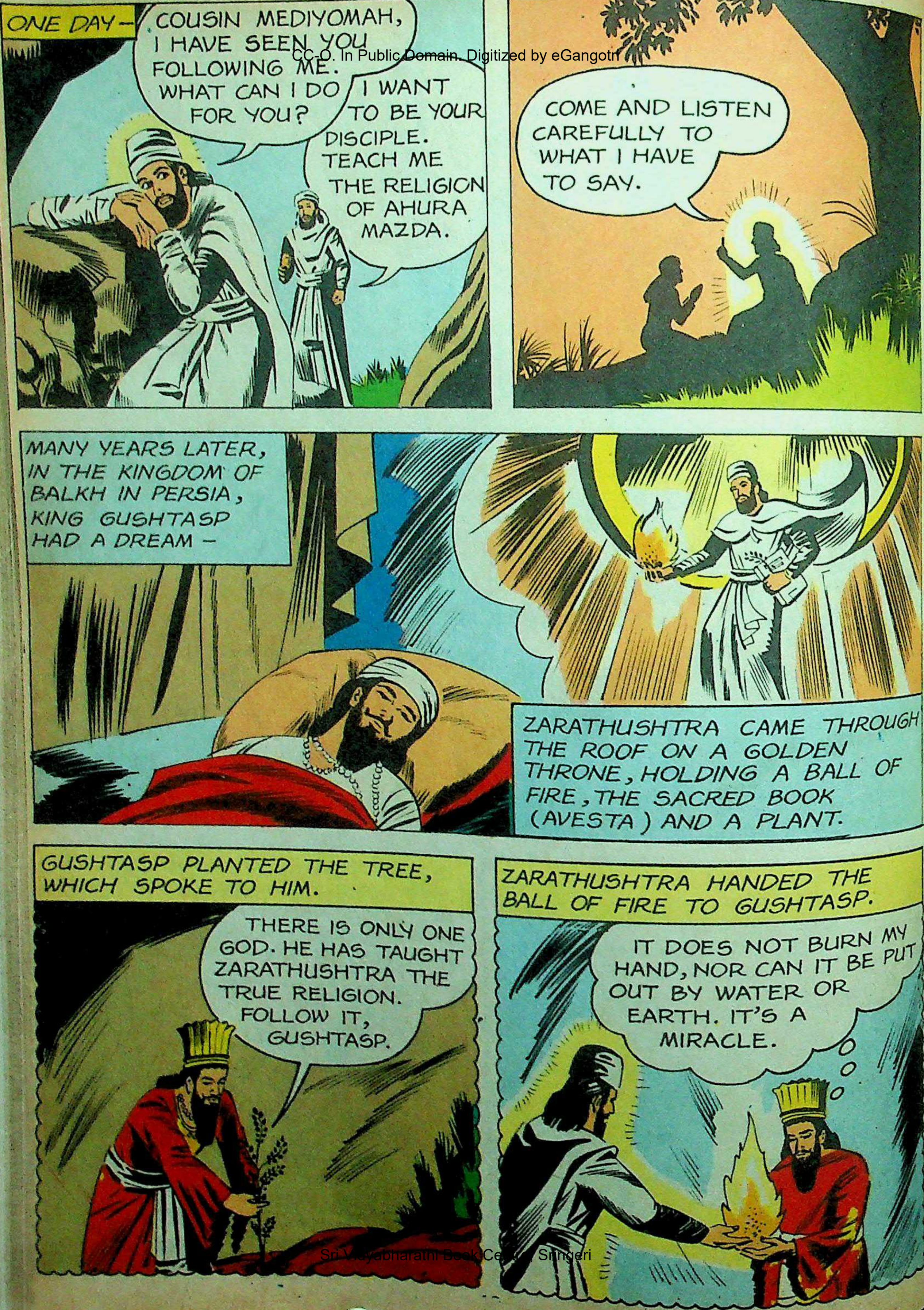

HE BEGAN TO CROSS IT.
THE WATER REACHED HIS KNEES...
....THEN HIS CHEST...
...AND HIS NECK. BUT NO HIGHER.
WHEN HE REACHED THE OTHER SIDE, HE STEPPED OUT, GLOWING WITH A NEW LIGHT.
THIS MIRACULOUS EPISODE INDICATED THAT THE NEW RELIGION ZARATHUSHTRA WAS TO FOUND, WOULD SPREAD THROUGH THE WORLD IN FOUR STAGES.


THE ANGEL OF THE GOOD MIND, VOHU MANO, STOOD BEFORE HIM.
ZARATHUSHTRA, WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?
FOR THE WILL OF GOD. YOU, VOHU MANO, CAN HELP ME.
CLOSE YOUR EYES.
NOW OPEN THEM.
I AM AHURA MAZDA. THE RIGHTEOUS MAN IS THE ONE WHO IS TRUTHFUL, JUST, CHARITABLE. HE LOOKS AFTER ALL MY CREATIONS, RESPECTS THEM, PROTECTS THEM. HE IS THE MAN I SHALL BLESS FOREVER. GO FORTH ZARATHUSHTRA AND SPREAD MY MESSAGE.
I WILL, MY LORD. BUT GIVE ME A SYMBOL.
EVERY SHINING OBJECT IS THE SYMBOL OF GOD. FIRE BURNS AWAY ALL EVIL AND IT CAN NEVER BE MADE IMPURE.


I SHALL TEACH THE PEOPLE THE NEW RELIGION OF HUMATA (GOOD THOUGHTS), HUKHTA (GOOD WORDS) AND HVARESHTA (GOOD DEEDS).
ZARATHUSHTRA WENT BACK TO HIS PEOPLE.
LISTEN TO ME, MY BROTHERS. IT IS UP TO YOU TO DECIDE WHETHER YOU WANT TO TREAD THE PATH OF GOOD OR THE PATH OF EVIL.
DESTROY ANGRA MAINYU, THE EVIL WITHIN YOU WITH SPENTA, THE BENEFICENT PART OF YOU.
GOOD WILL ALWAYS BE REWARDED. EVIL CAN NEVER ESCAPE PUNISHMENT. THAT IS THE MESSAGE OF AHURA MAZDA.
BANISH EVIL FROM YOUR HEART AND MIND, AND MAKE ROOM FOR GOD. GOD DOES NOT SIT IN HEAVEN ON A GOLDEN THRONE. HE LIVES IN YOUR HEART.


ONE DAY –
COUSIN MEDIYOMAH, I HAVE SEEN YOU FOLLOWING ME. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I WANT TO BE YOUR DISCIPLE. TEACH ME THE RELIGION OF AHURA MAZDA.
COME AND LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY.
MANY YEARS LATER, IN THE KINGDOM OF BALKH IN PERSIA, KING GUSHTASP HAD A DREAM –
ZARATHUSHTRA CAME THROUGH THE ROOF ON A GOLDEN THRONE, HOLDING A BALL OF FIRE, THE SACRED BOOK (AVESTA) AND A PLANT.
GUSHTASP PLANTED THE TREE, WHICH SPOKE TO HIM.
THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD. HE HAS TAUGHT ZARATHUSHTRA THE TRUE RELIGION. FOLLOW IT, GUSHTASP.
ZARATHUSHTRA HANDED THE BALL OF FIRE TO GUSHTASP.
IT DOES NOT BURN MY HAND, NOR CAN IT BE PUT OUT BY WATER OR EARTH. IT'S A MIRACLE.

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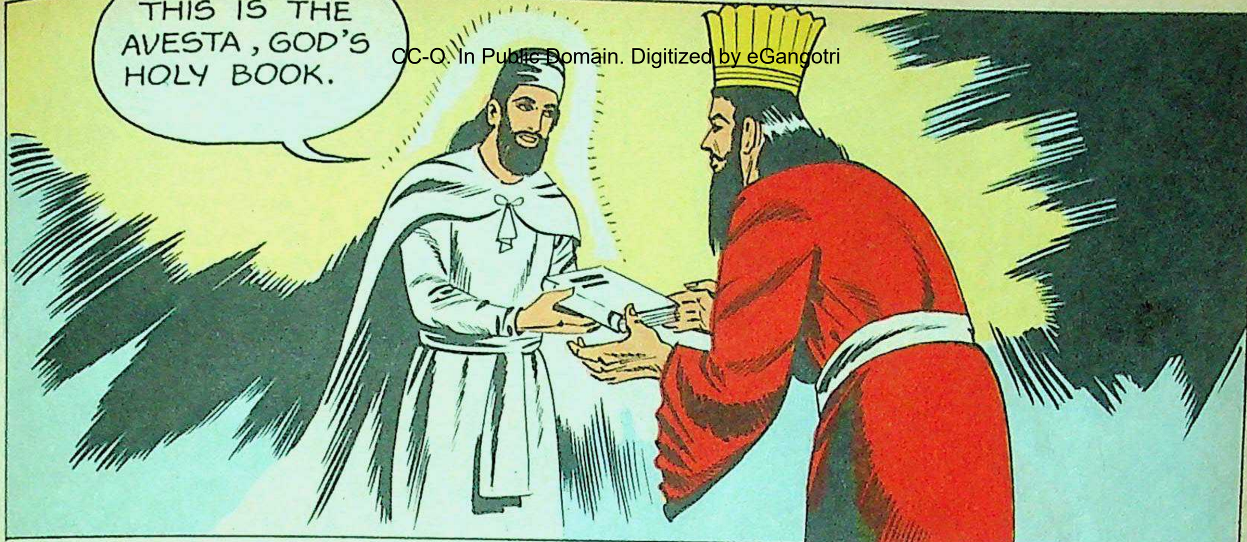
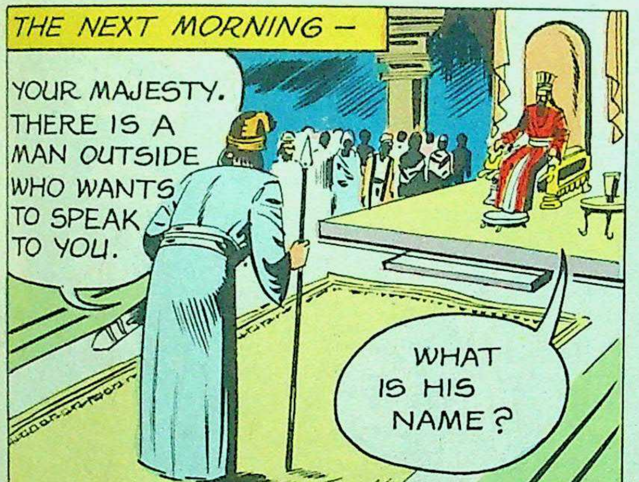
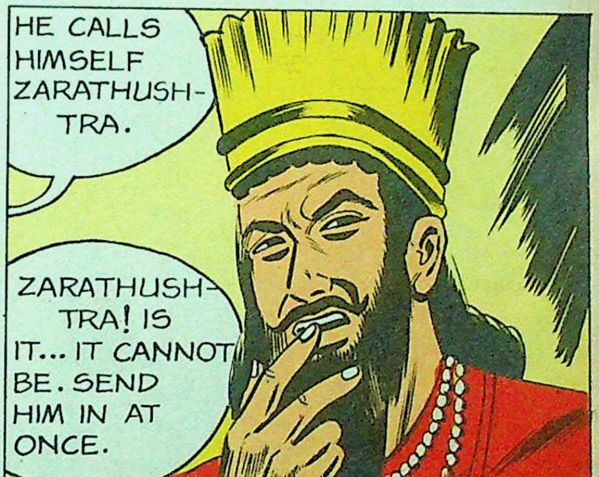
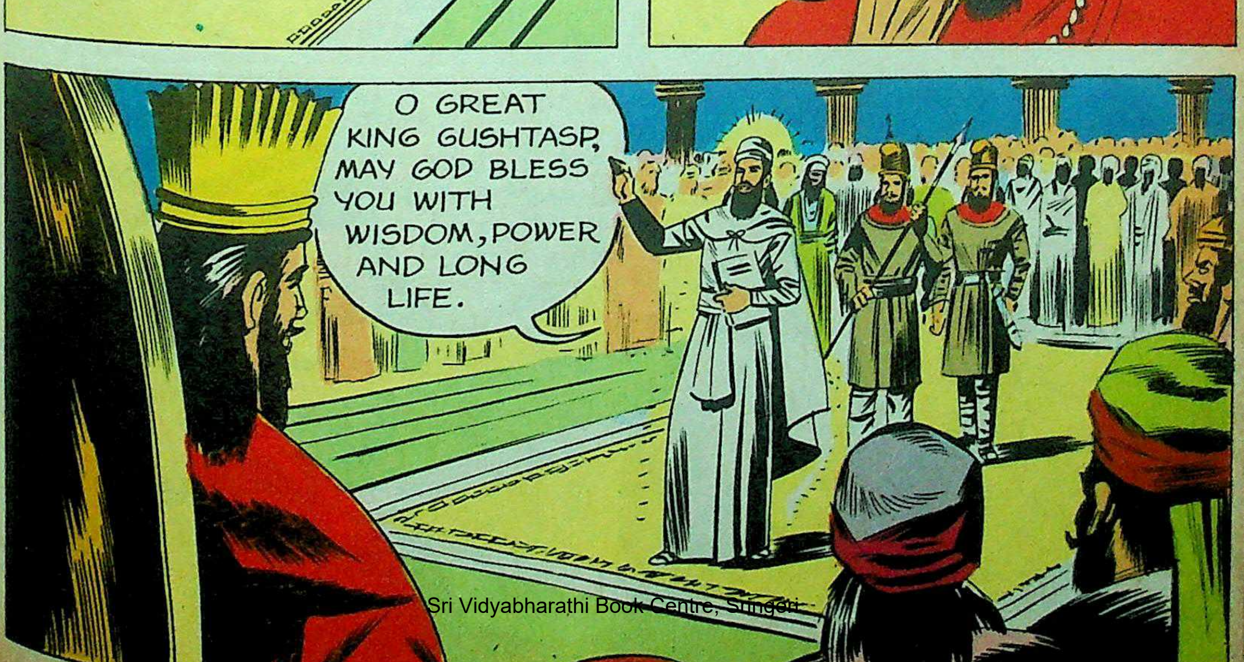
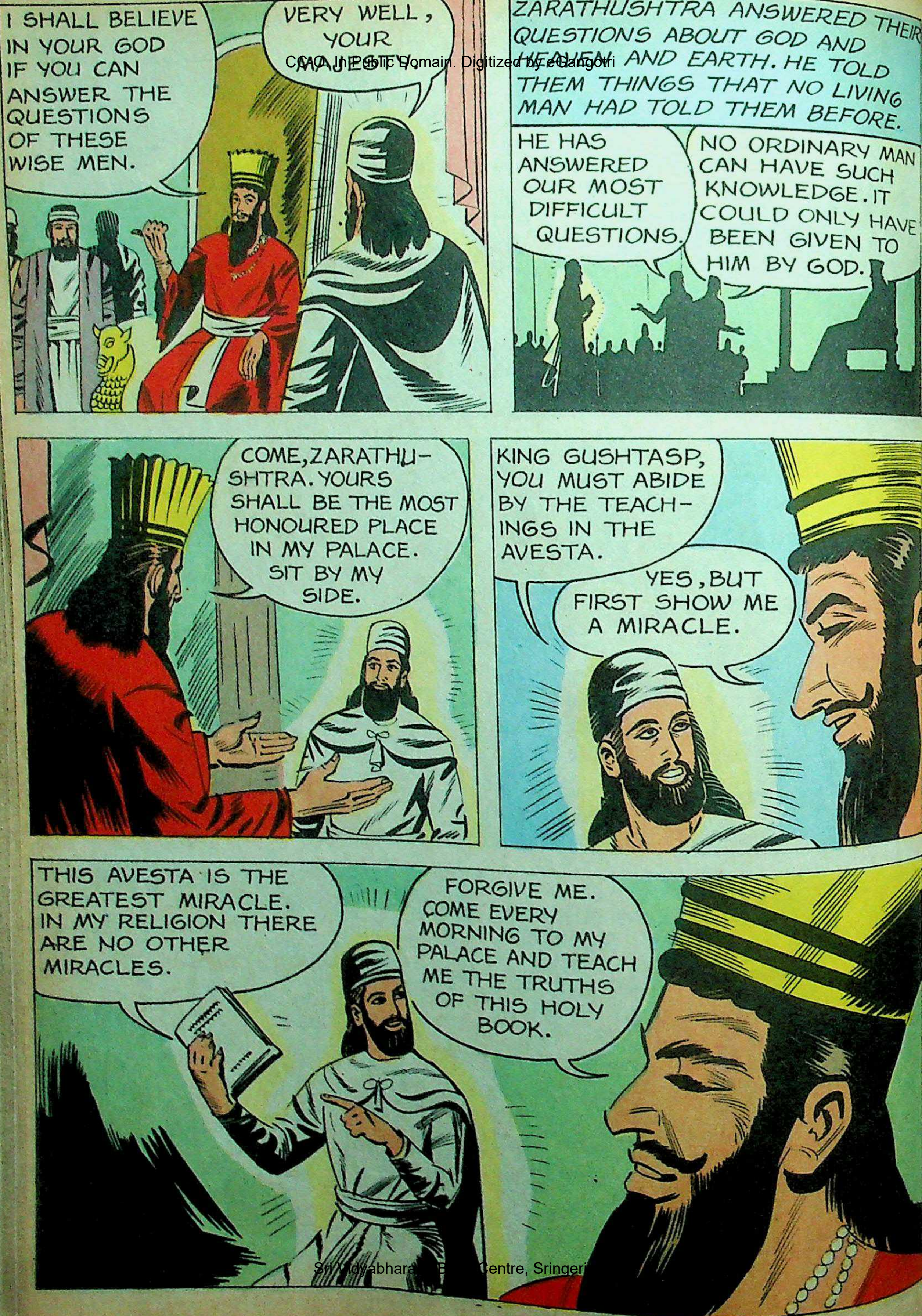

THIS IS THE AVESTA, GOD'S HOLY BOOK.


THE NEXT MORNING —
YOUR MAJESTY. THERE IS A MAN OUTSIDE WHO WANTS TO SPEAK TO YOU.
WHAT IS HIS NAME?


HE CALLS HIMSELF ZARATHUSHTRA.
ZARATHUSHTRA! IS IT... IT CANNOT BE. SEND HIM IN AT ONCE.


O GREAT KING GUSHTASP, MAY GOD BLESS YOU WITH WISDOM, POWER AND LONG LIFE.


I SHALL BELIEVE IN YOUR GOD IF YOU CAN ANSWER THE QUESTIONS OF THESE WISE MEN.
VERY WELL, YOUR MAJESTY.
ZARATHUSHTRA ANSWERED THEIR QUESTIONS ABOUT GOD AND HEAVEN AND EARTH. HE TOLD THEM THINGS THAT NO LIVING MAN HAD TOLD THEM BEFORE.
HE HAS ANSWERED OUR MOST DIFFICULT QUESTIONS.
NO ORDINARY MAN CAN HAVE SUCH KNOWLEDGE. IT COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO HIM BY GOD.
COME, ZARATHUSHTRA. YOURS SHALL BE THE MOST HONOURED PLACE IN MY PALACE. SIT BY MY SIDE.
KING GUSHTASP, YOU MUST ABIDE BY THE TEACHINGS IN THE AVESTA.
YES, BUT FIRST SHOW ME A MIRACLE.
THIS AVESTA IS THE GREATEST MIRACLE. IN MY RELIGION THERE ARE NO OTHER MIRACLES.
FORGIVE ME. COME EVERY MORNING TO MY PALACE AND TEACH ME THE TRUTHS OF THIS HOLY BOOK.

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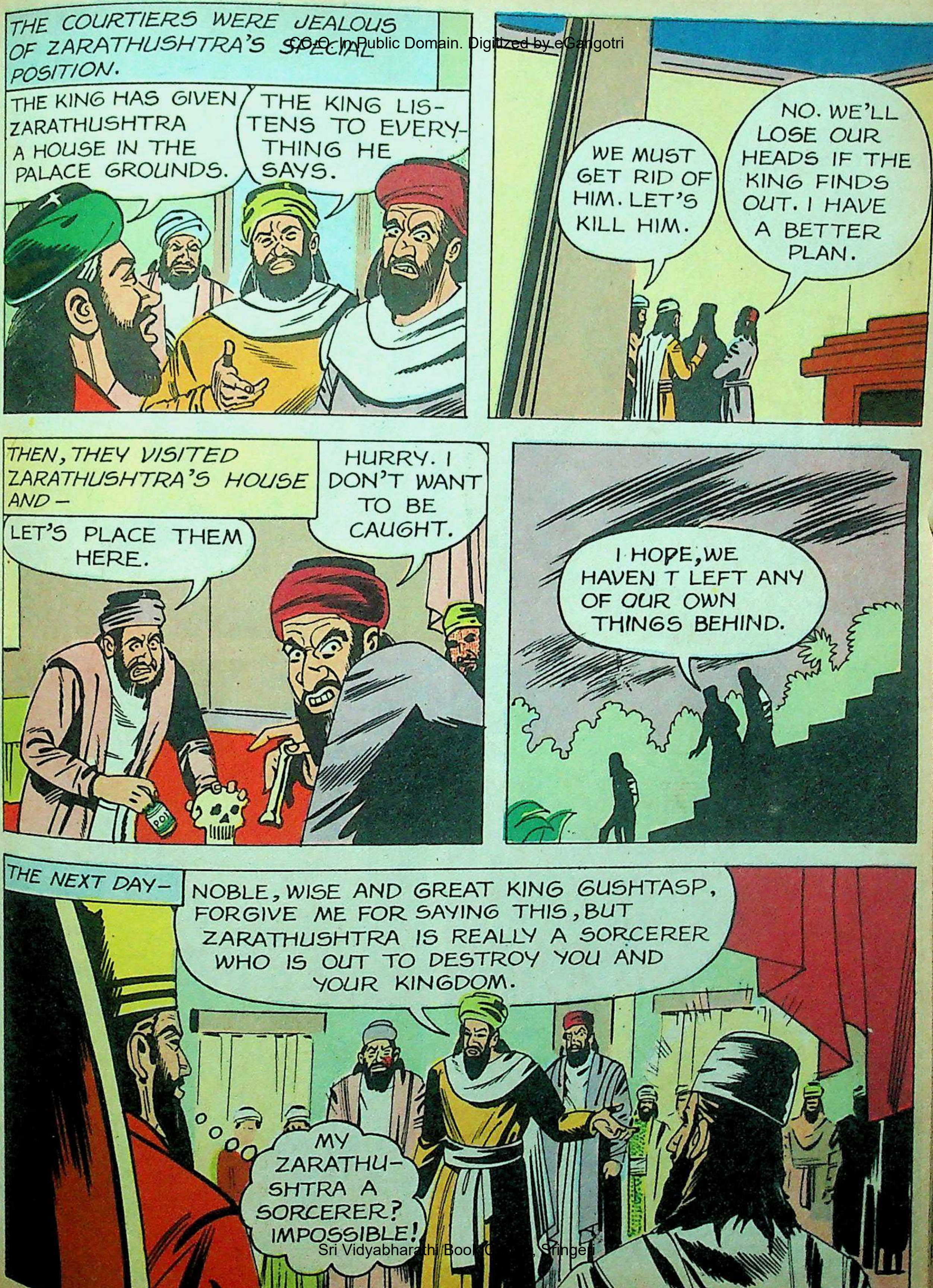
THE COURTIERS WERE JEALOUS OF ZARATHUSHTRA'S SPECIAL POSITION.
THE KING HAS GIVEN ZARATHUSHTRA A HOUSE IN THE PALACE GROUNDS.
THE KING LISTENS TO EVERYTHING HE SAYS.
WE MUST GET RID OF HIM. LET'S KILL HIM.
NO. WE'LL LOSE OUR HEADS IF THE KING FINDS OUT. I HAVE A BETTER PLAN.
THEN, THEY VISITED ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE AND–
LET'S PLACE THEM HERE.
HURRY. I DON'T WANT TO BE CAUGHT.
POI
I HOPE, WE HAVEN T LEFT ANY OF OUR OWN THINGS BEHIND.
THE NEXT DAY–
NOBLE, WISE AND GREAT KING GUSHTASP, FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING THIS, BUT ZARATHUSHTRA IS REALLY A SORCERER WHO IS OUT TO DESTROY YOU AND YOUR KINGDOM.
MY ZARATHUSHTRA A SORCERER? IMPOSSIBLE!

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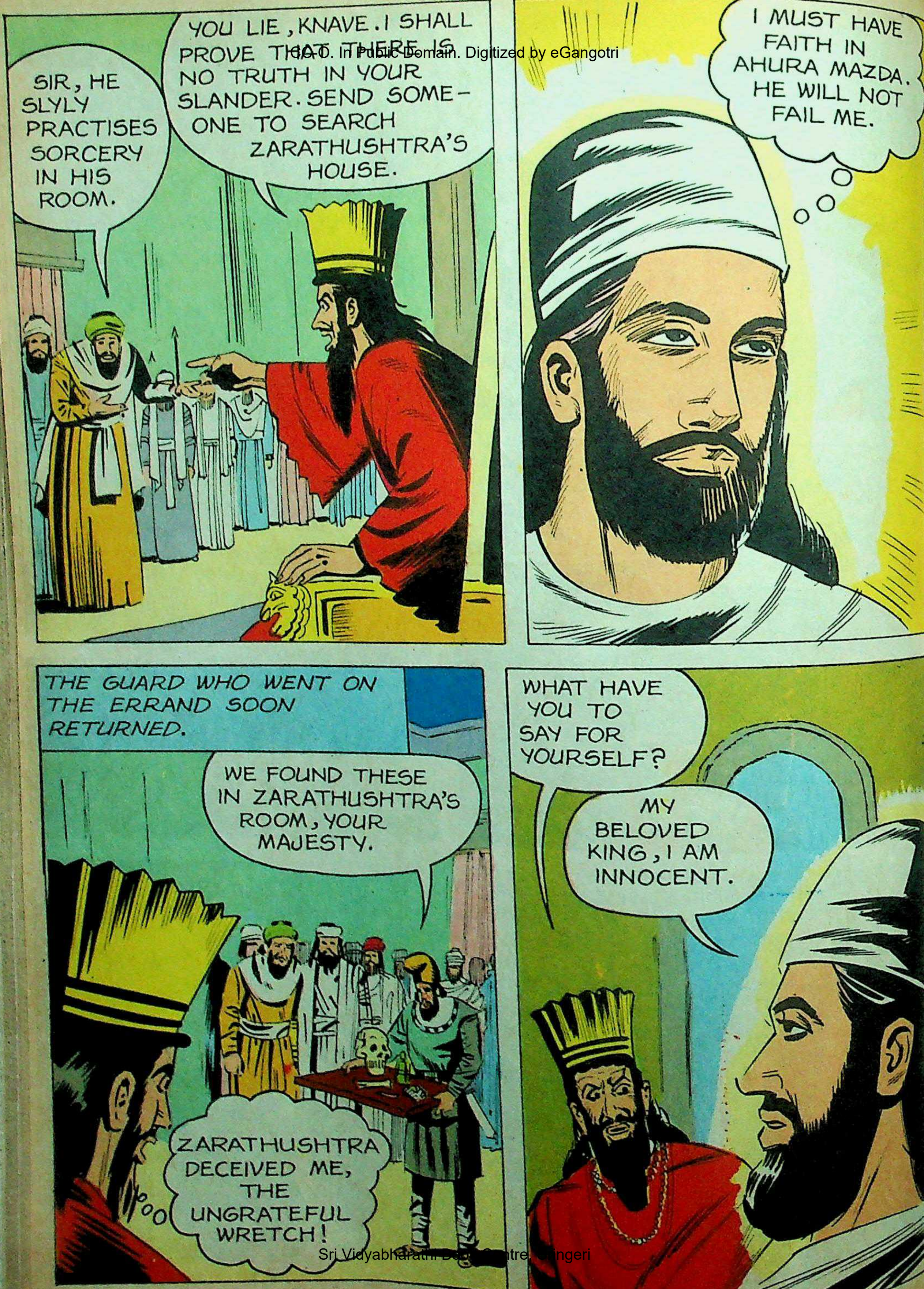
SIR, HE SLYLY PRACTISES SORCERY IN HIS ROOM.
YOU LIE, KNAVE. I SHALL PROVE THAT THERE IS NO TRUTH IN YOUR SLANDER. SEND SOMEONE TO SEARCH ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE.
I MUST HAVE FAITH IN AHURA MAZDA. HE WILL NOT FAIL ME.
THE GUARD WHO WENT ON THE ERRAND SOON RETURNED.
WE FOUND THESE IN ZARATHUSHTRA'S ROOM, YOUR MAJESTY.
ZARATHUSHTRA DECEIVED ME, THE UNGRATEFUL WRETCH!
WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF?
MY BELOVED KING, I AM INNOCENT.

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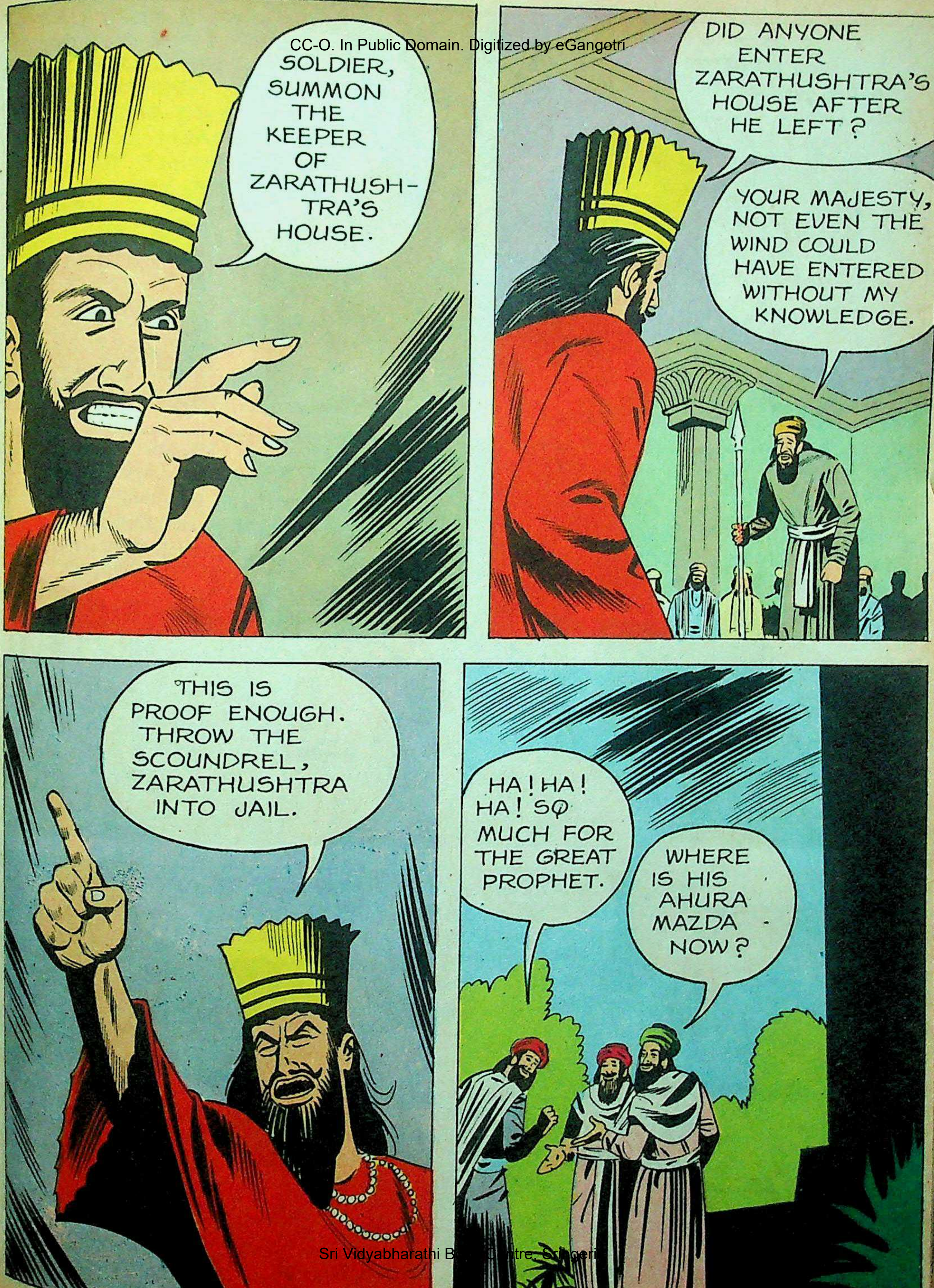
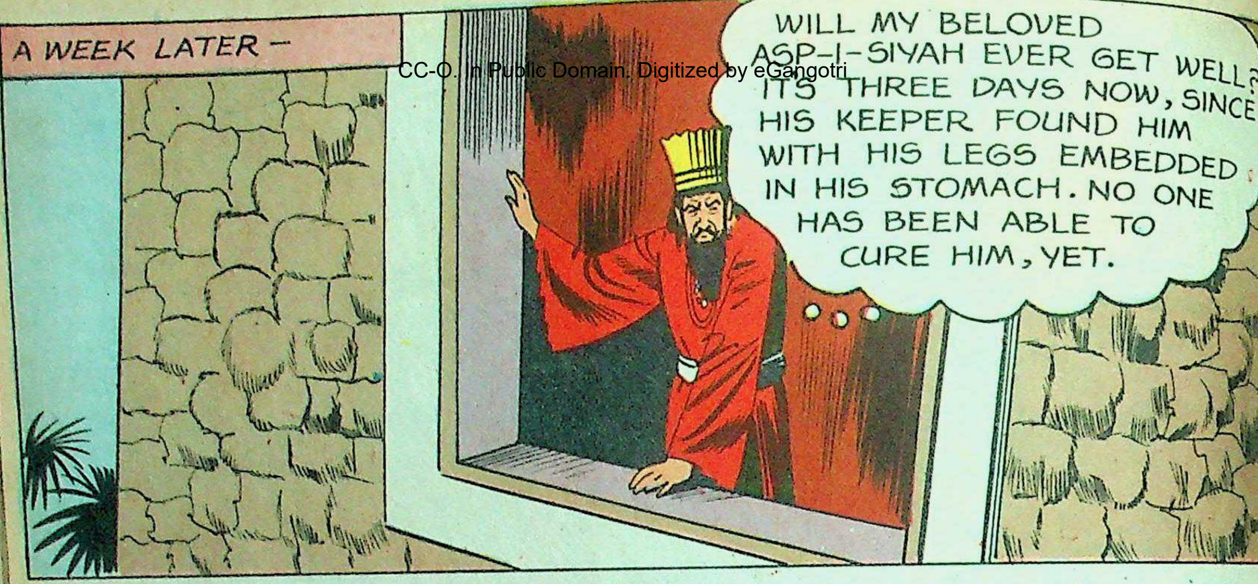
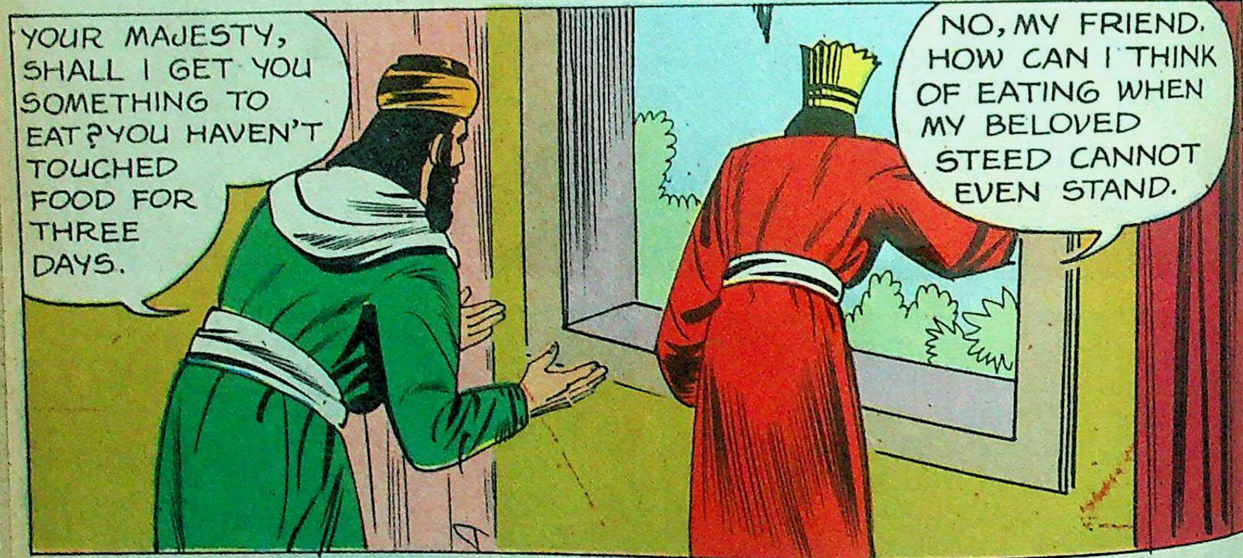
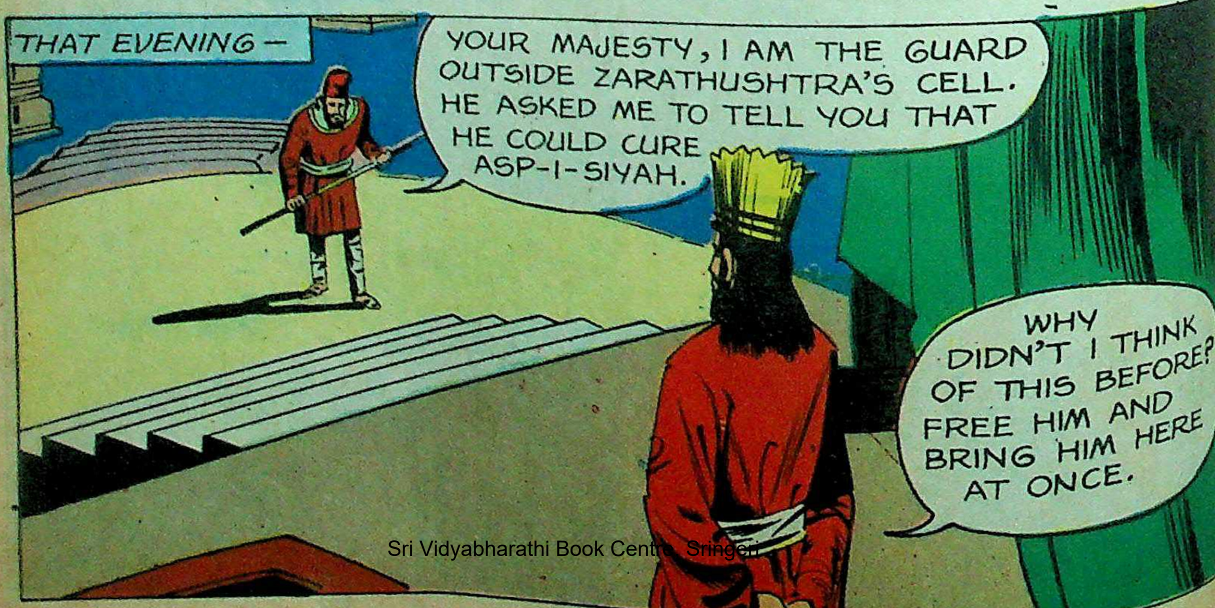
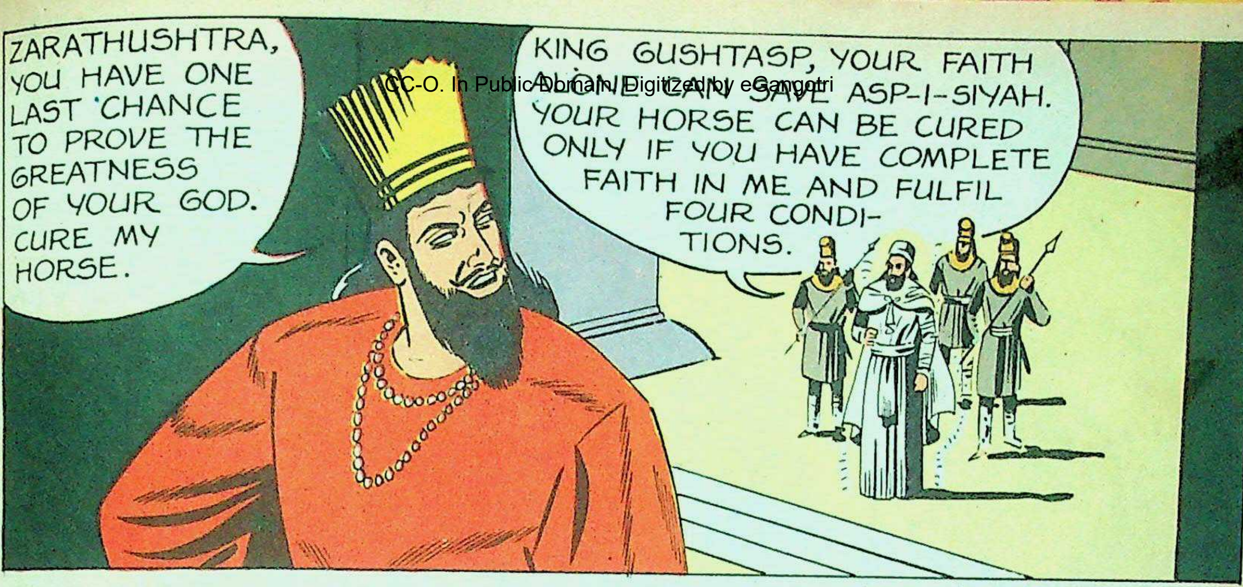
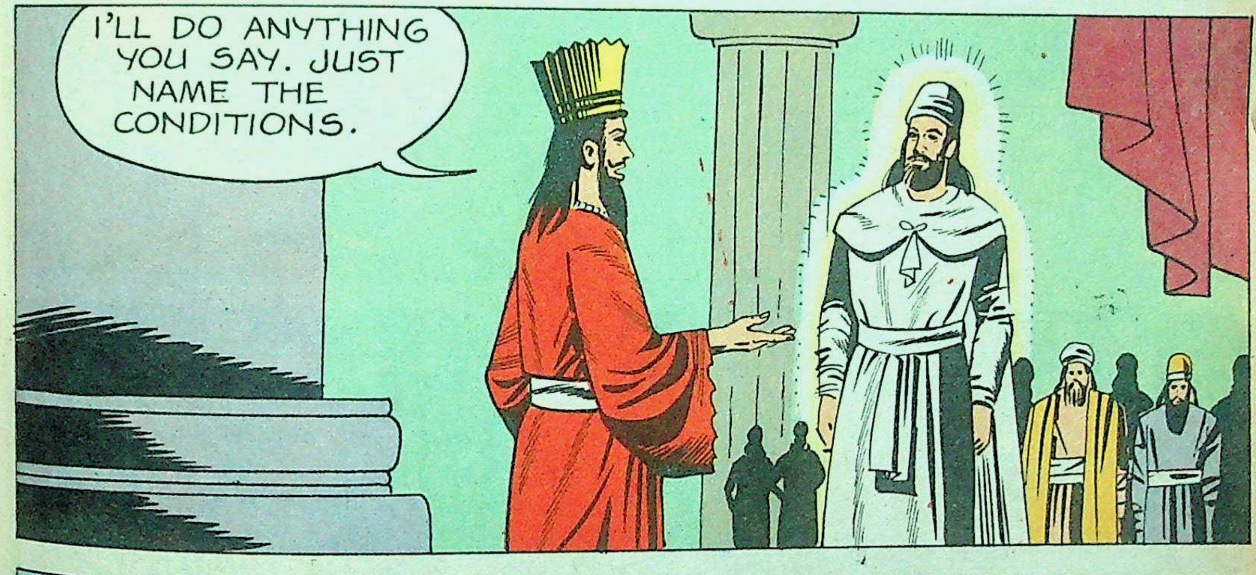

SOLDIER, SUMMON THE KEEPER OF ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE.
DID ANYONE ENTER ZARATHUSHTRA'S HOUSE AFTER HE LEFT?
YOUR MAJESTY, NOT EVEN THE WIND COULD HAVE ENTERED WITHOUT MY KNOWLEDGE.
THIS IS PROOF ENOUGH. THROW THE SCOUNDREL, ZARATHUSHTRA INTO JAIL.
HA! HA! HA! SO MUCH FOR THE GREAT PROPHET.
WHERE IS HIS AHURA MAZDA NOW?

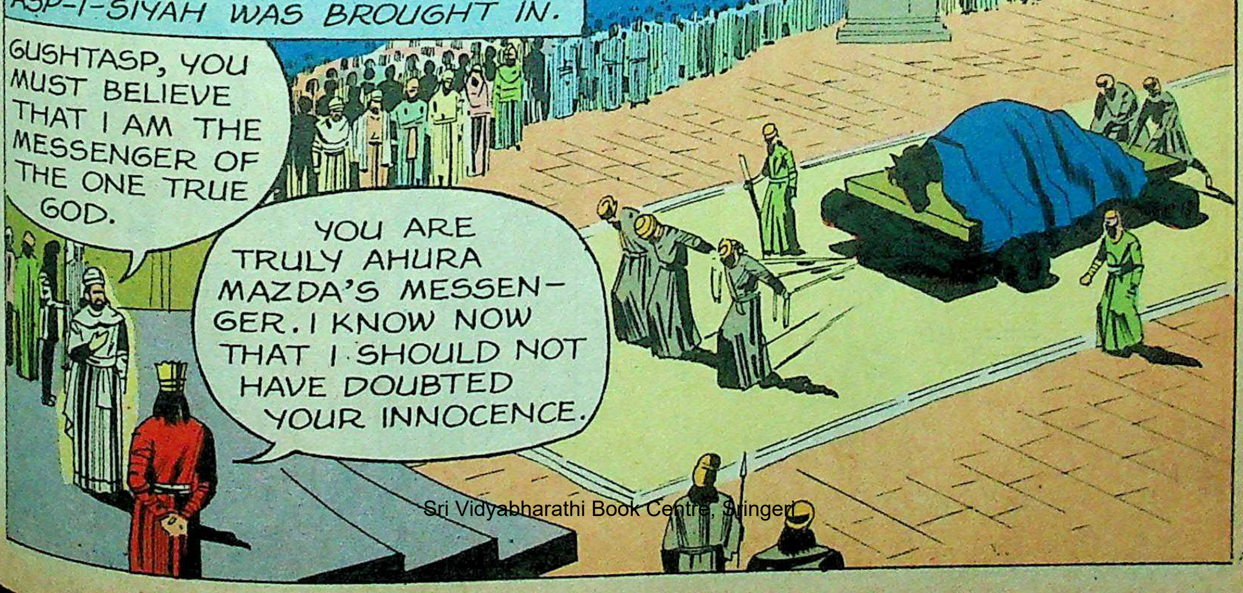

A WEEK LATER –
WILL MY BELOVED ASP-I-SIYAH EVER GET WELL? ITS THREE DAYS NOW, SINCE HIS KEEPER FOUND HIM WITH HIS LEGS EMBEDDED IN HIS STOMACH. NO ONE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CURE HIM, YET.

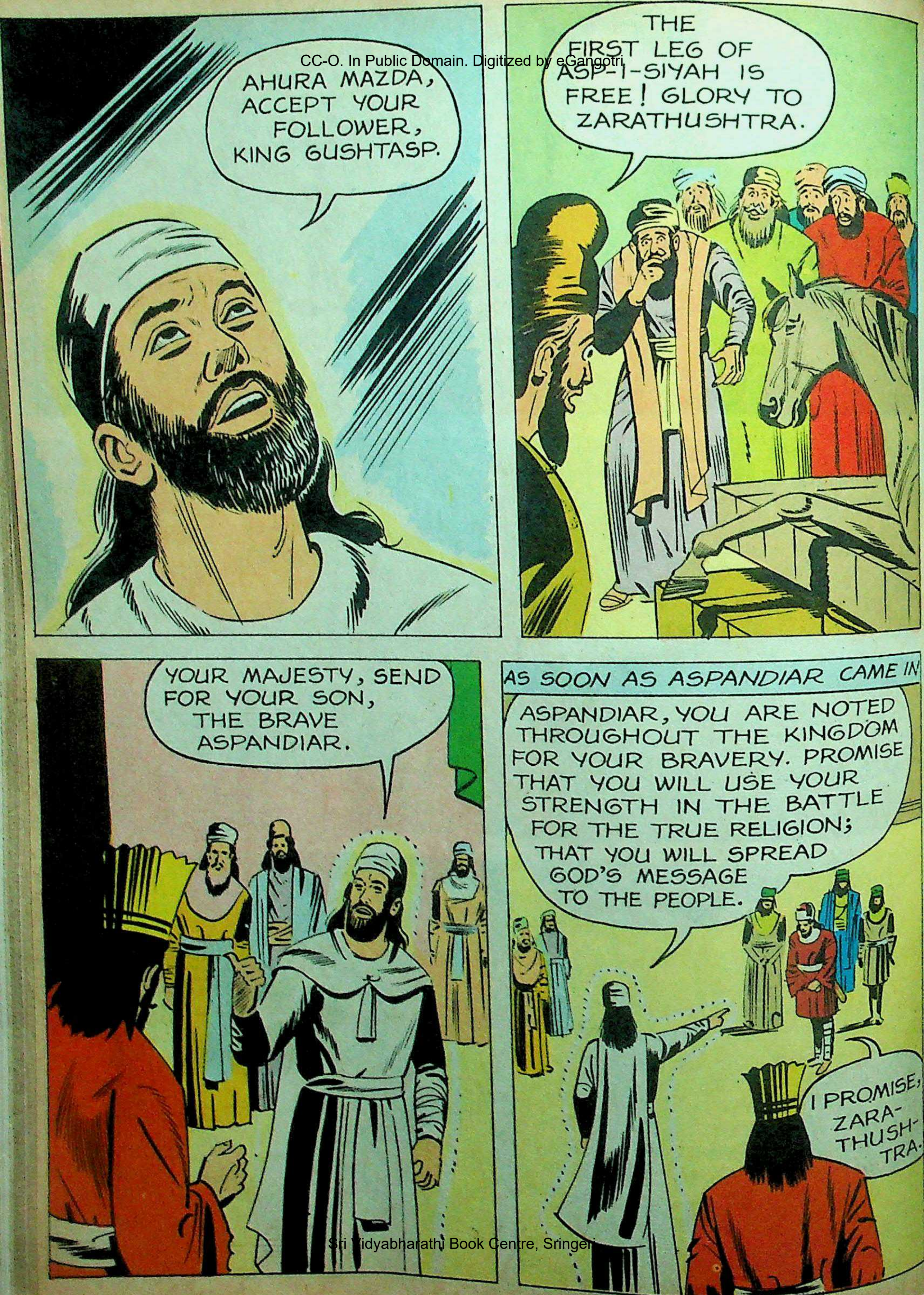

YOUR MAJESTY, SHALL I GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT? YOU HAVEN'T TOUCHED FOOD FOR THREE DAYS.
NO, MY FRIEND. HOW CAN I THINK OF EATING WHEN MY BELOVED STEED CANNOT EVEN STAND.

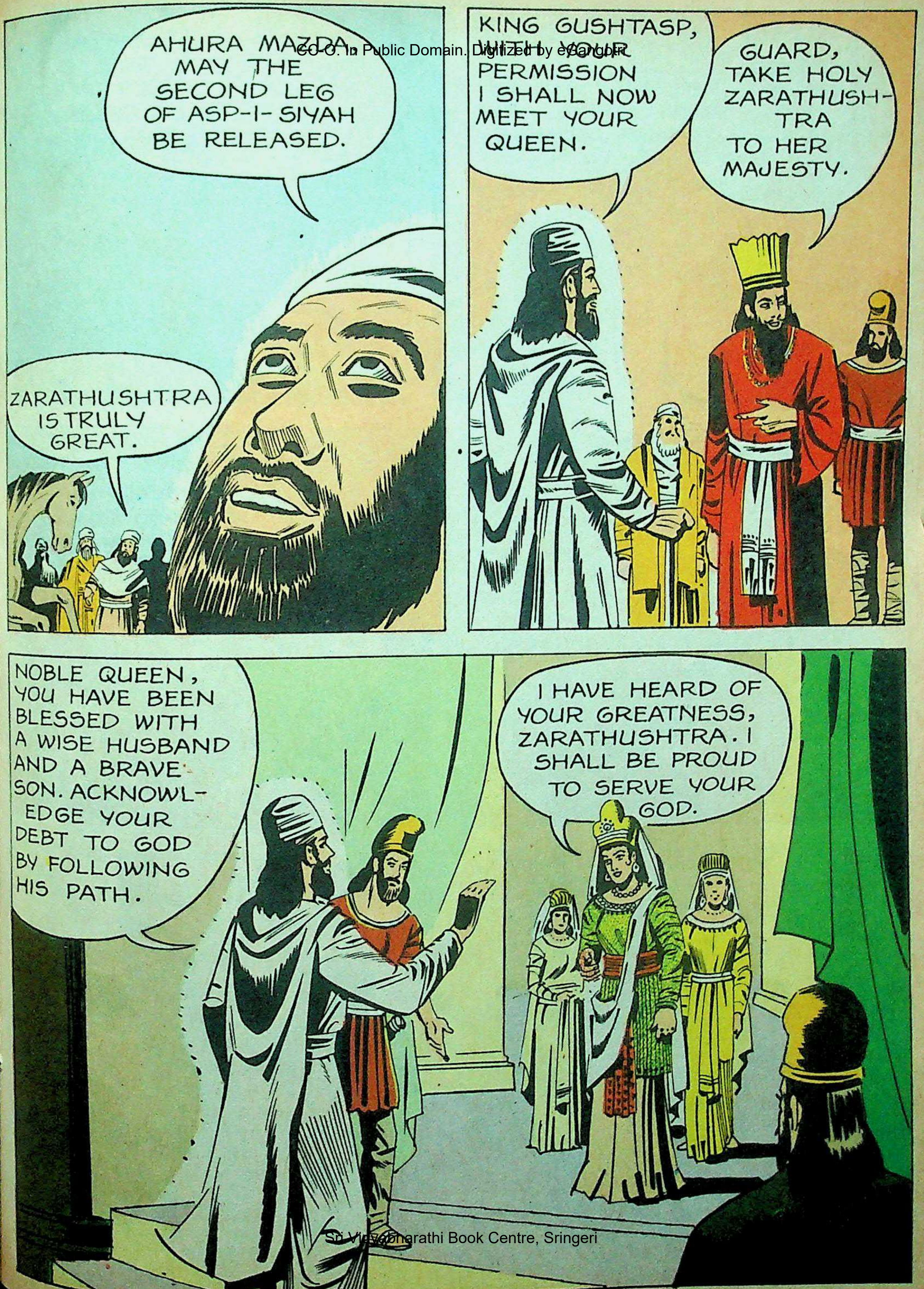

THAT EVENING –
YOUR MAJESTY, I AM THE GUARD OUTSIDE ZARATHUSHTRA'S CELL. HE ASKED ME TO TELL YOU THAT HE COULD CURE ASP-I-SIYAH.
WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF THIS BEFORE? FREE HIM AND BRING HIM HERE AT ONCE.


ZARATHUSHTRA, YOU HAVE ONE LAST CHANCE TO PROVE THE GREATNESS OF YOUR GOD. CURE MY HORSE.
KING GUSHTASP, YOUR FAITH ALONE CAN SAVE ASP-I-SIYAH. YOUR HORSE CAN BE CURED ONLY IF YOU HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN ME AND FULFIL FOUR CONDITIONS.


I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY. JUST NAME THE CONDITIONS.


ASP-I-SIYAH WAS BROUGHT IN.
GUSHTASP, YOU MUST BELIEVE THAT I AM THE MESSENGER OF THE ONE TRUE GOD.
YOU ARE TRULY AHURA MAZDA'S MESSENGER. I KNOW NOW THAT I SHOULD NOT HAVE DOUBTED YOUR INNOCENCE.


AHURA MAZDA, ACCEPT YOUR FOLLOWER, KING GUSHTASP.
THE FIRST LEG OF ASP-I-SIYAH IS FREE! GLORY TO ZARATHUSHTRA.
YOUR MAJESTY, SEND FOR YOUR SON, THE BRAVE ASPANDIAR.
AS SOON AS ASPANDIAR CAME IN
ASPANDIAR, YOU ARE NOTED THROUGHOUT THE KINGDOM FOR YOUR BRAVERY. PROMISE THAT YOU WILL USE YOUR STRENGTH IN THE BATTLE FOR THE TRUE RELIGION; THAT YOU WILL SPREAD GOD'S MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE.
I PROMISE, ZARATHUSHTRA.


AHURA MAZDA, MAY THE SECOND LEG OF ASP-I-SIYAH BE RELEASED.
ZARATHUSHTRA IS TRULY GREAT.
KING GUSHTASP, WITH YOUR PERMISSION I SHALL NOW MEET YOUR QUEEN.
GUARD, TAKE HOLY ZARATHUSHTRA TO HER MAJESTY.
NOBLE QUEEN, YOU HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH A WISE HUSBAND AND A BRAVE SON. ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR DEBT TO GOD BY FOLLOWING HIS PATH.
I HAVE HEARD OF YOUR GREATNESS, ZARATHUSHTRA. I SHALL BE PROUD TO SERVE YOUR GOD.

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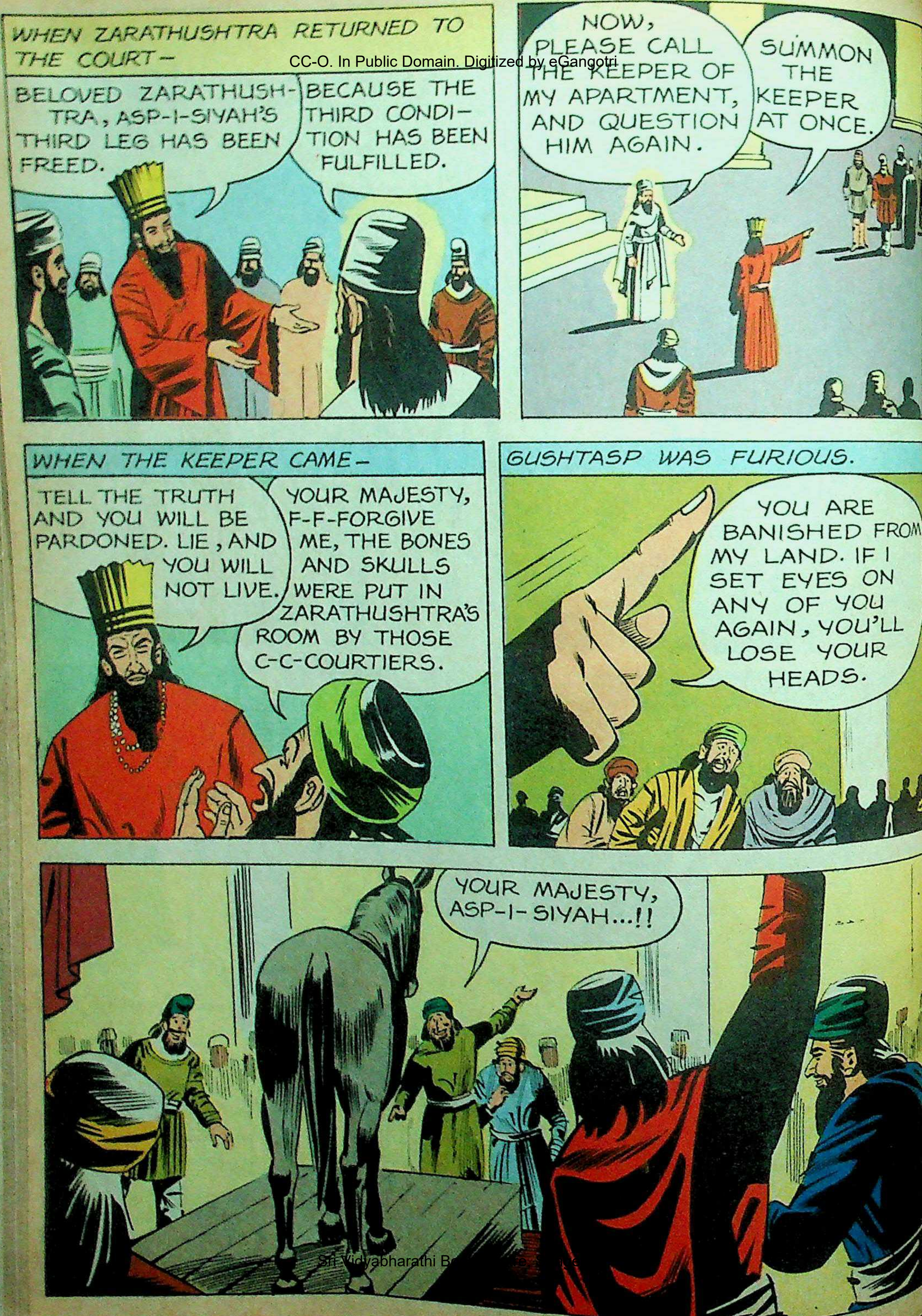
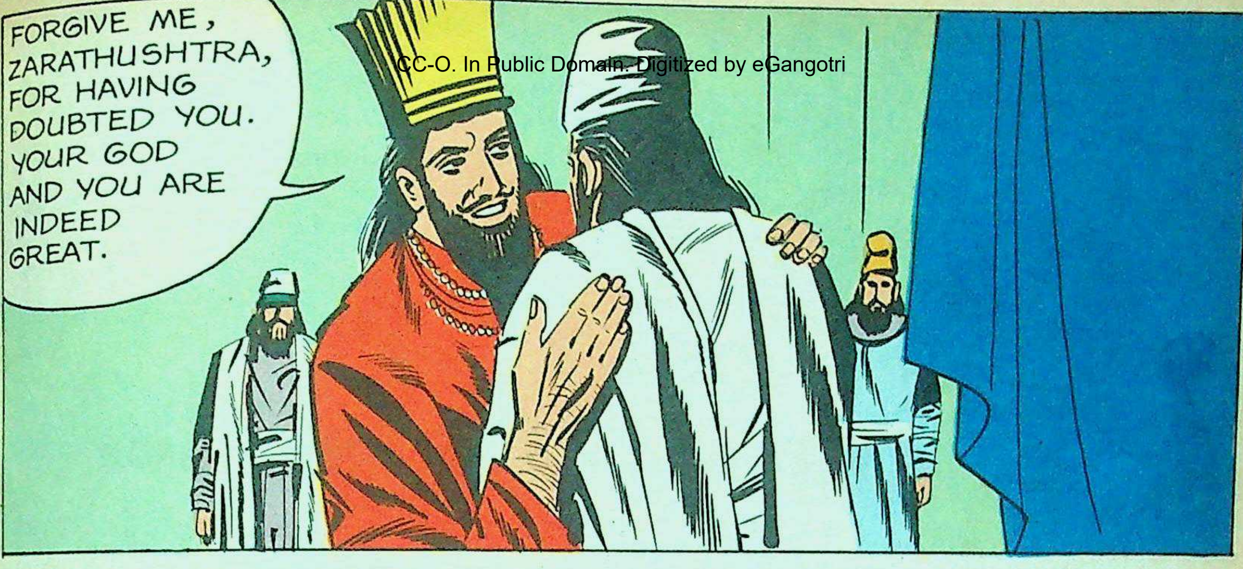
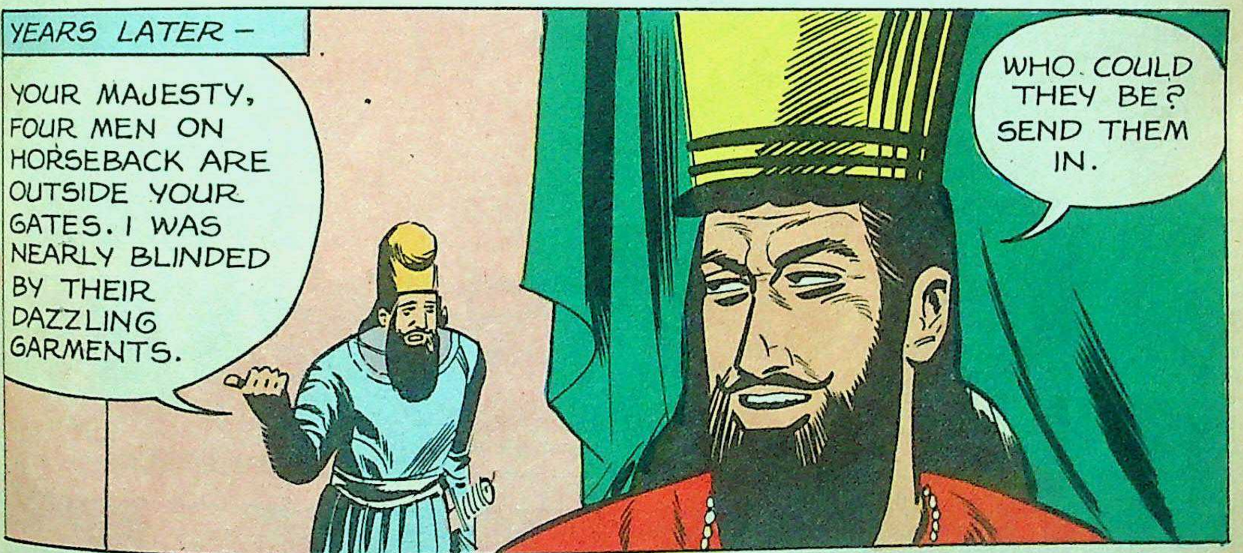
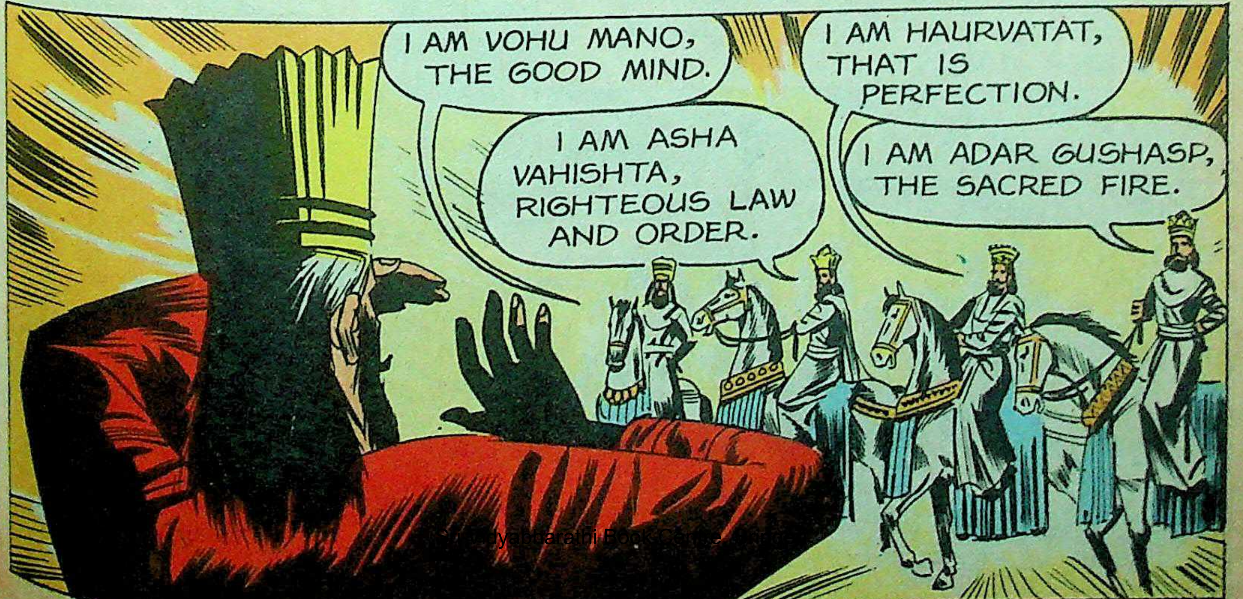
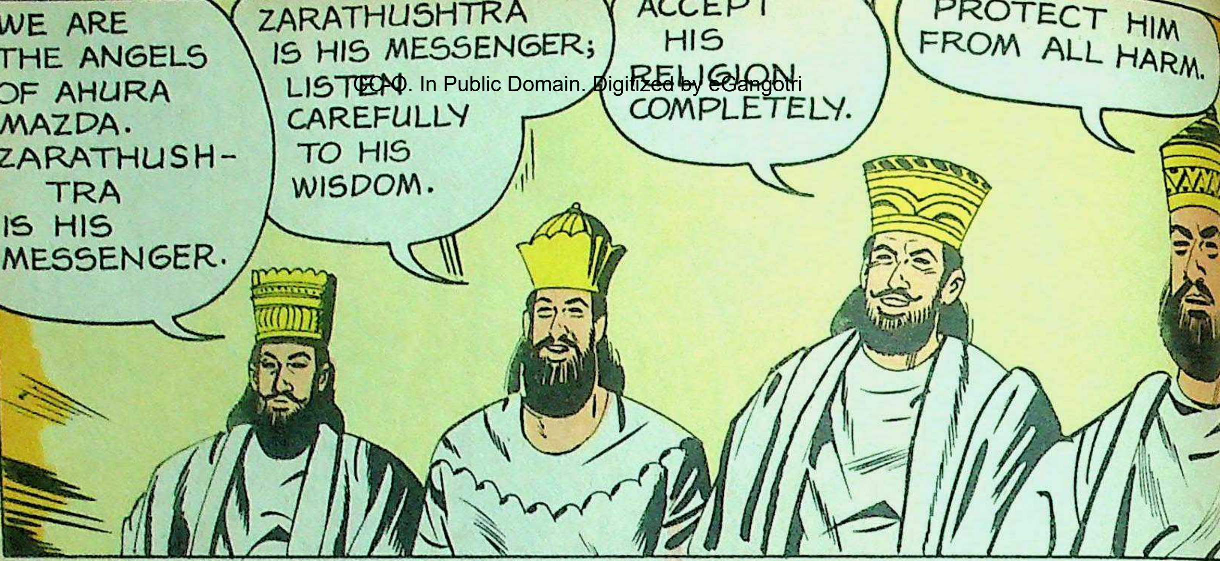
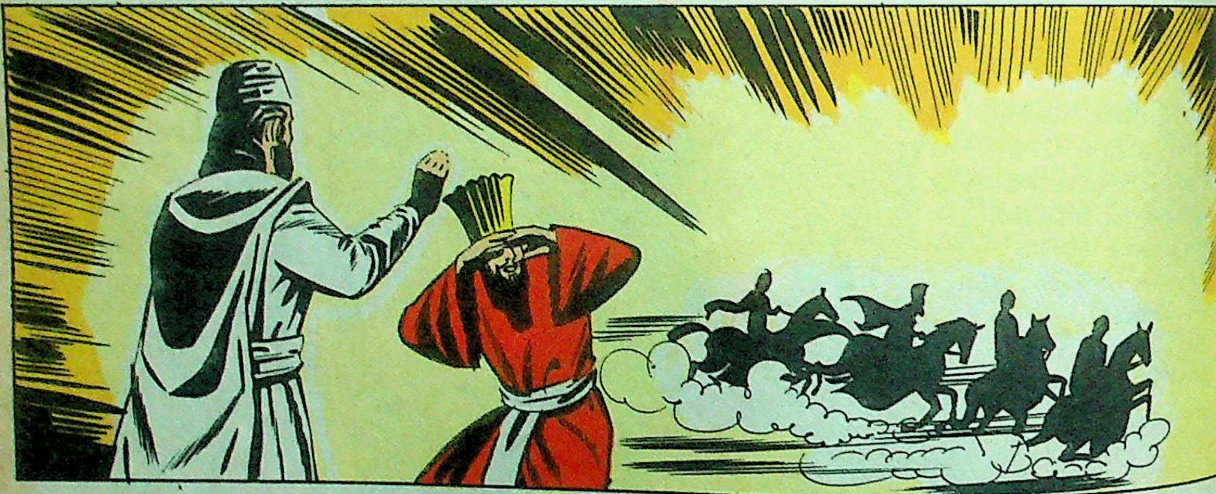

WHEN ZARATHUSHTRA RETURNED TO THE COURT–
BELOVED ZARATHUSHTRA, ASP-I-SIYAH'S THIRD LEG HAS BEEN FREED.
BECAUSE THE THIRD CONDITION HAS BEEN FULFILLED.
NOW, PLEASE CALL THE KEEPER OF MY APARTMENT, AND QUESTION HIM AGAIN.
SUMMON THE KEEPER AT ONCE.
WHEN THE KEEPER CAME–
TELL THE TRUTH AND YOU WILL BE PARDONED. LIE, AND YOU WILL NOT LIVE.
YOUR MAJESTY, F-F-FORGIVE ME, THE BONES AND SKULLS WERE PUT IN ZARATHUSHTRA'S ROOM BY THOSE C-C-COURTIERS.
GUSHTASP WAS FURIOUS.
YOU ARE BANISHED FROM MY LAND. IF I SET EYES ON ANY OF YOU AGAIN, YOU'LL LOSE YOUR HEADS.
YOUR MAJESTY, ASP-I-SIYAH...!!

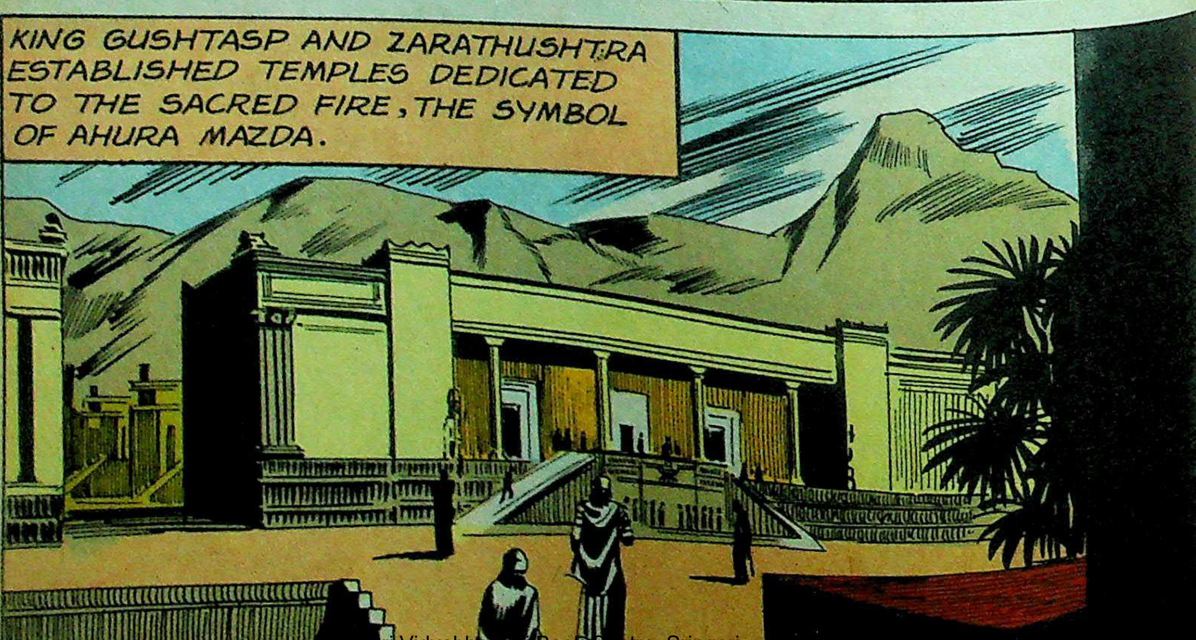

FORGIVE ME, ZARATHUSHTRA, FOR HAVING DOUBTED YOU. YOUR GOD AND YOU ARE INDEED GREAT.


YEARS LATER –
YOUR MAJESTY, FOUR MEN ON HORSEBACK ARE OUTSIDE YOUR GATES. I WAS NEARLY BLINDED BY THEIR DAZZLING GARMENTS.
WHO COULD THEY BE? SEND THEM IN.


I AM VOHU MANO, THE GOOD MIND.
I AM ASHA VAHISHTA, RIGHTEOUS LAW AND ORDER.
I AM HAURVATAT, THAT IS PERFECTION.
I AM ADAR GUSHASP, THE SACRED FIRE.


WE ARE THE ANGELS OF AHURA MAZDA. ZARATHUSHTRA IS HIS MESSENGER.
ZARATHUSHTRA IS HIS MESSENGER; LISTEN CAREFULLY TO HIS WISDOM.
ACCEPT HIS RELIGION COMPLETELY.
PROTECT HIM FROM ALL HARM.




KING GUSHTASP AND ZARATHUSHTRA ESTABLISHED TEMPLES DEDICATED TO THE SACRED FIRE, THE SYMBOL OF AHURA MAZDA.

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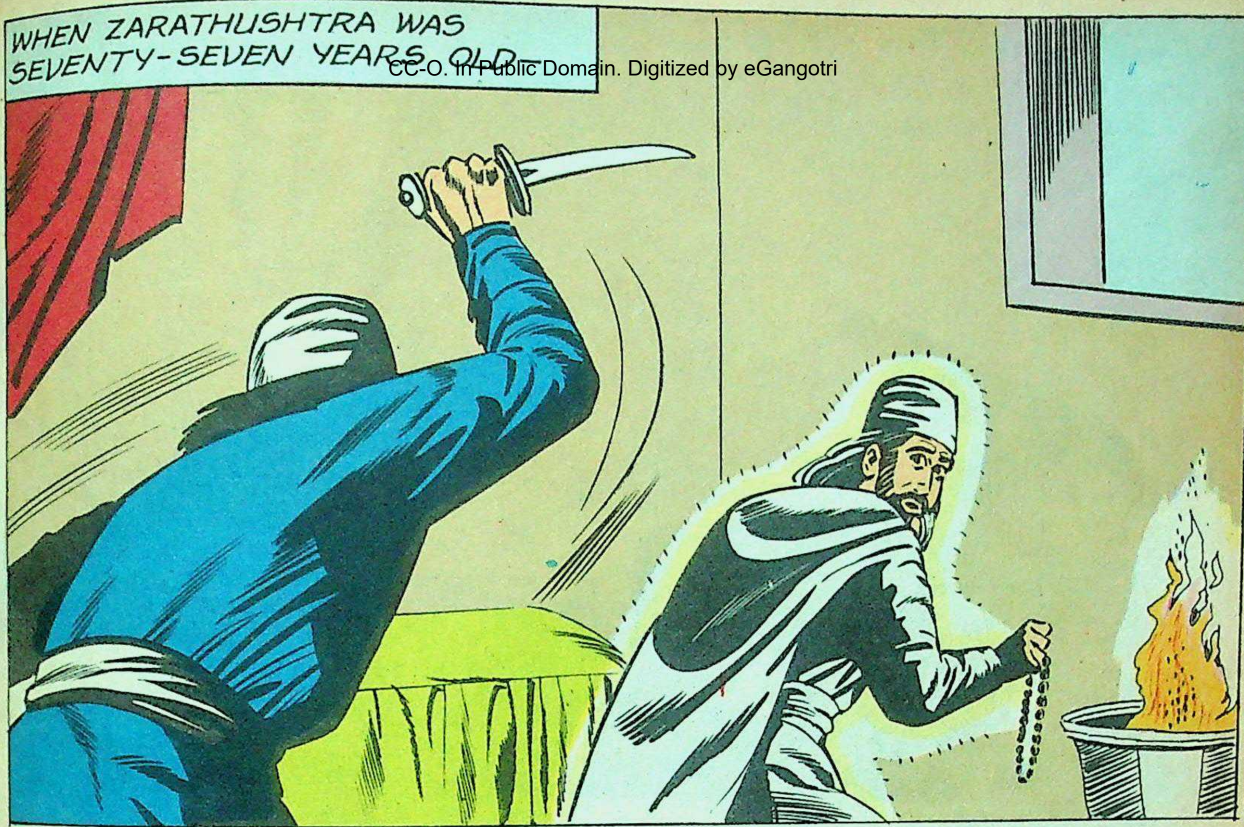
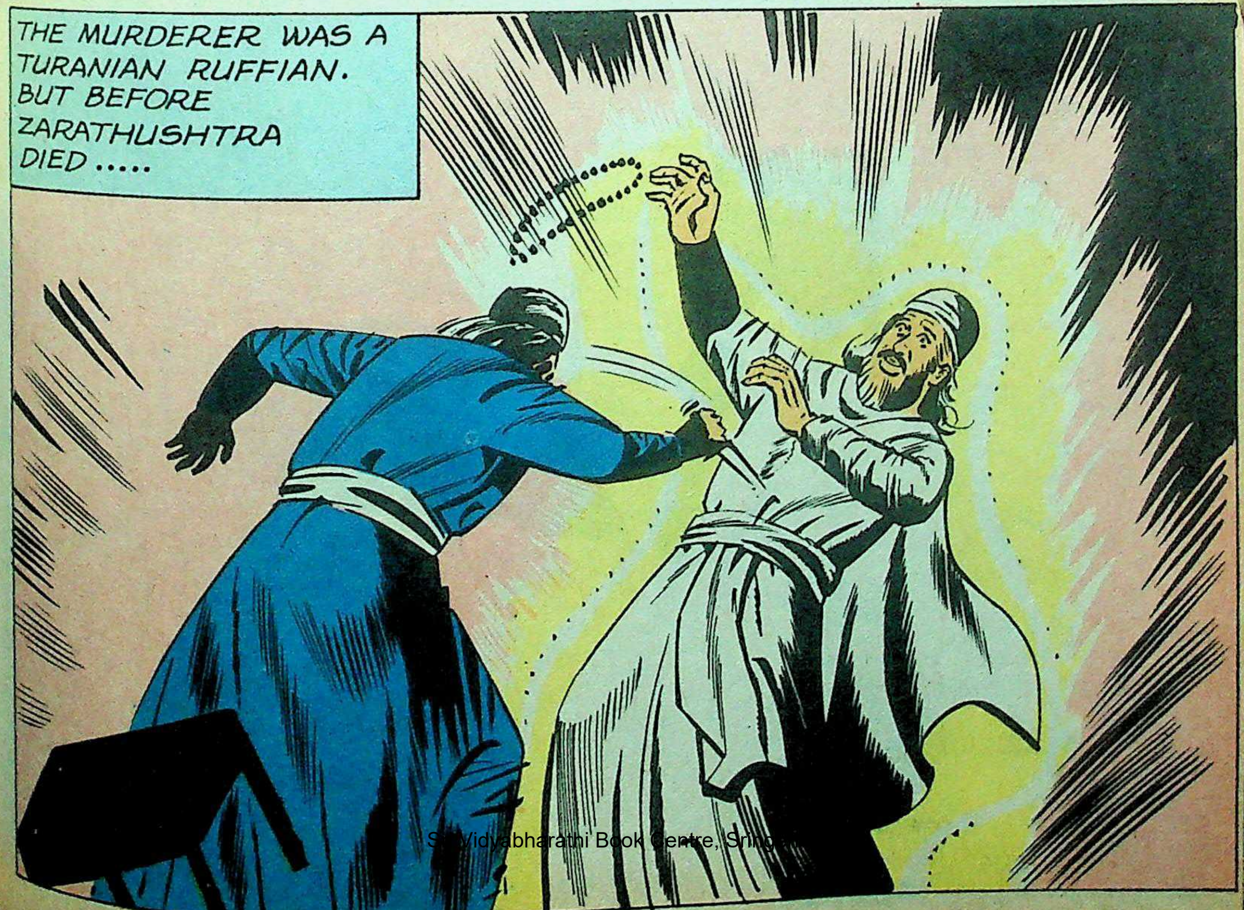
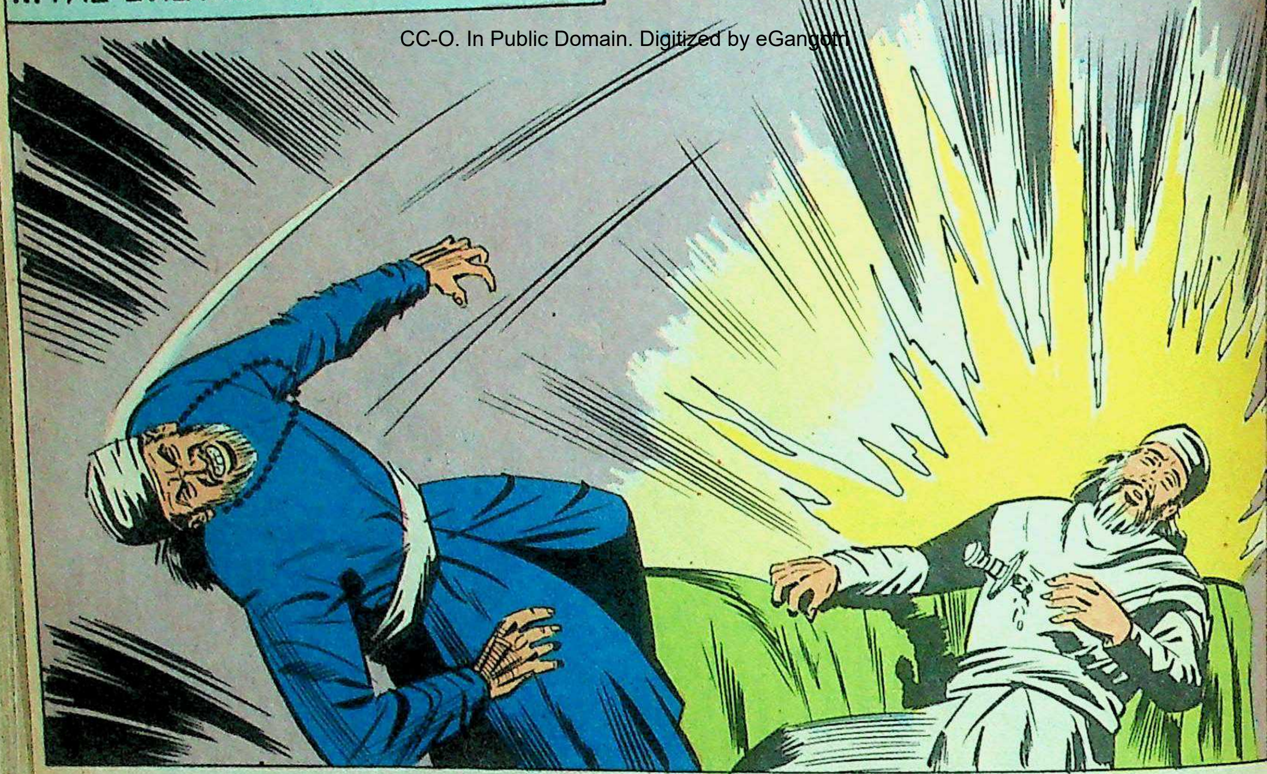
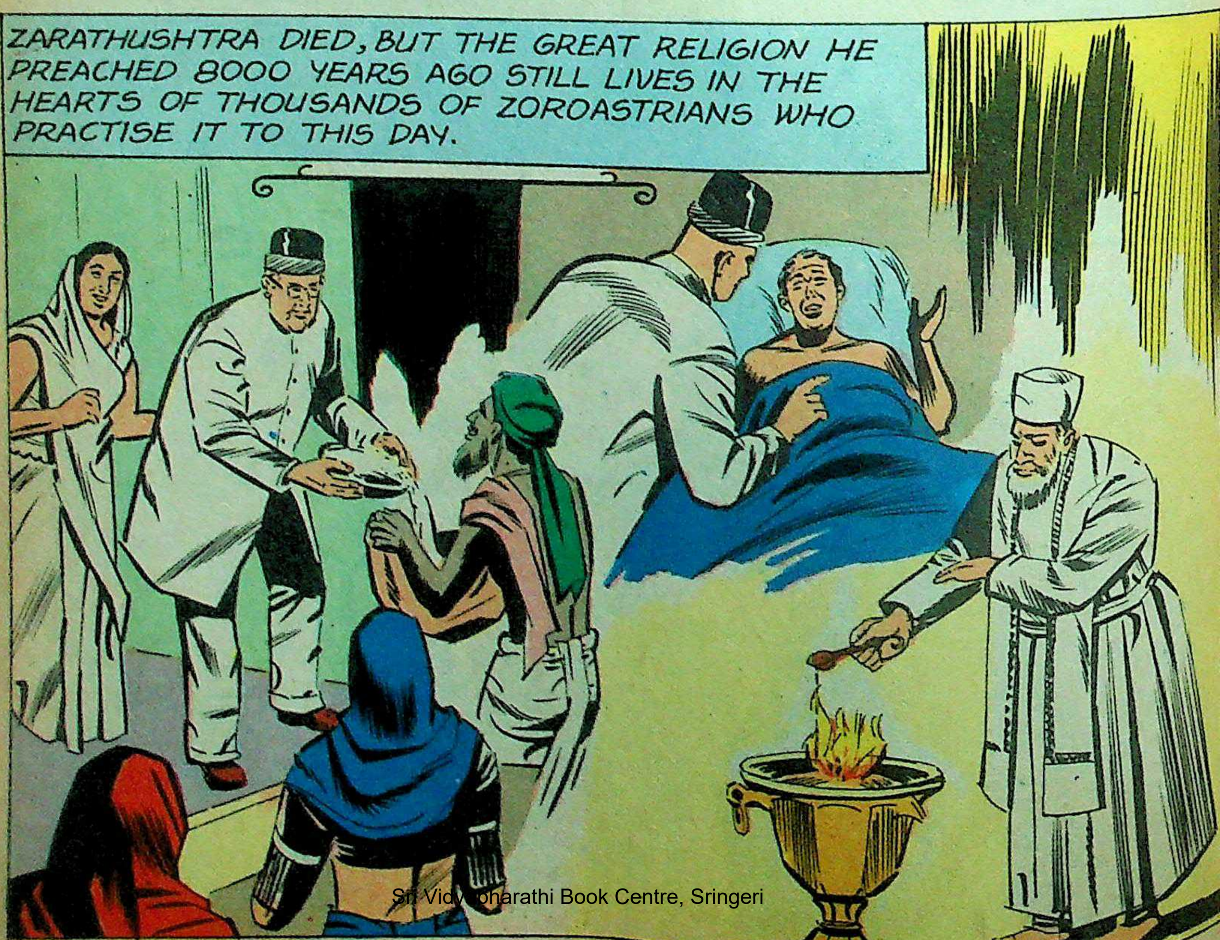

WHEN ZARATHUSHTRA WAS SEVENTY-SEVEN YEARS OLD–


THE MURDERER WAS A TURANIAN RUFFIAN. BUT BEFORE ZARATHUSHTRA DIED.....

...THE EVIL MAN TOO FELL DEAD.



ZARATHUSHTRA DIED, BUT THE GREAT RELIGION HE PREACHED 8000 YEARS AGO STILL LIVES IN THE HEARTS OF THOUSANDS OF ZOROASTRIANS WHO PRACTISE IT TO THIS DAY.



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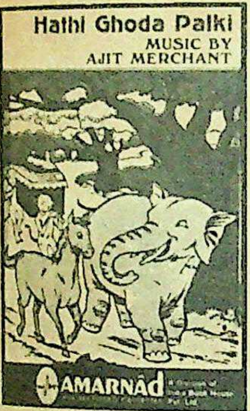
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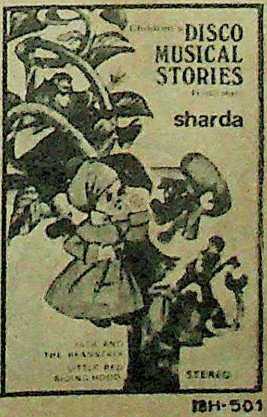
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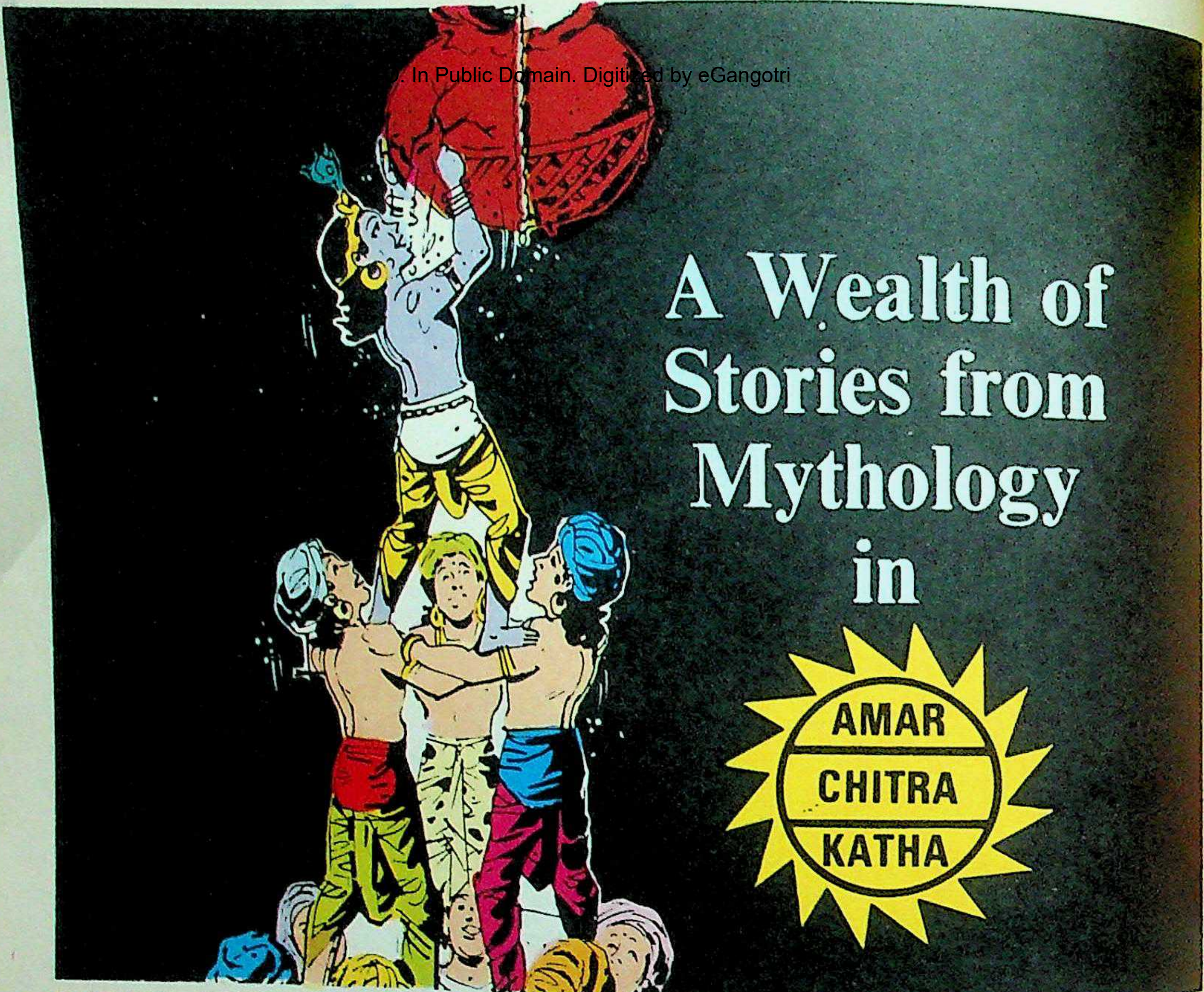
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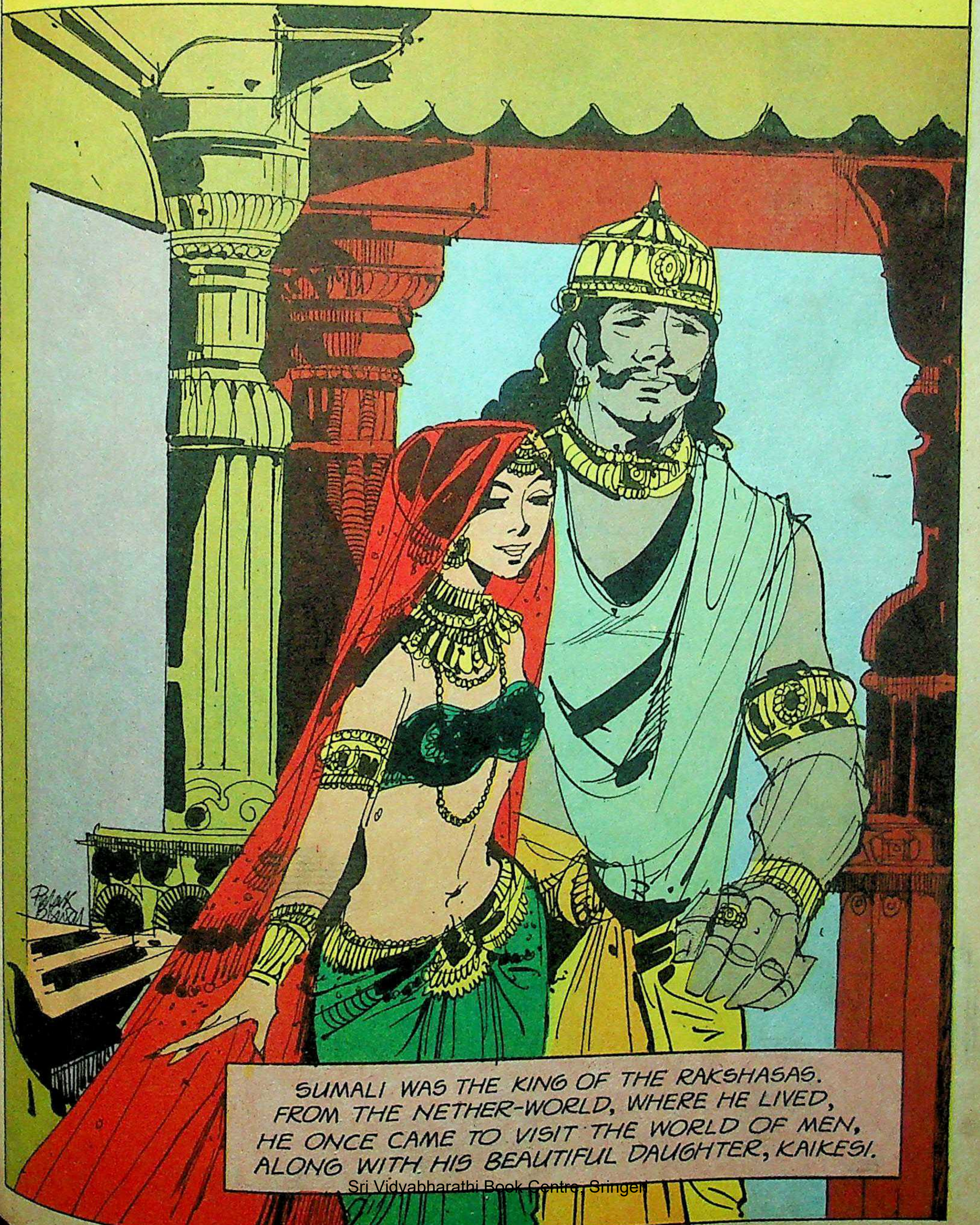
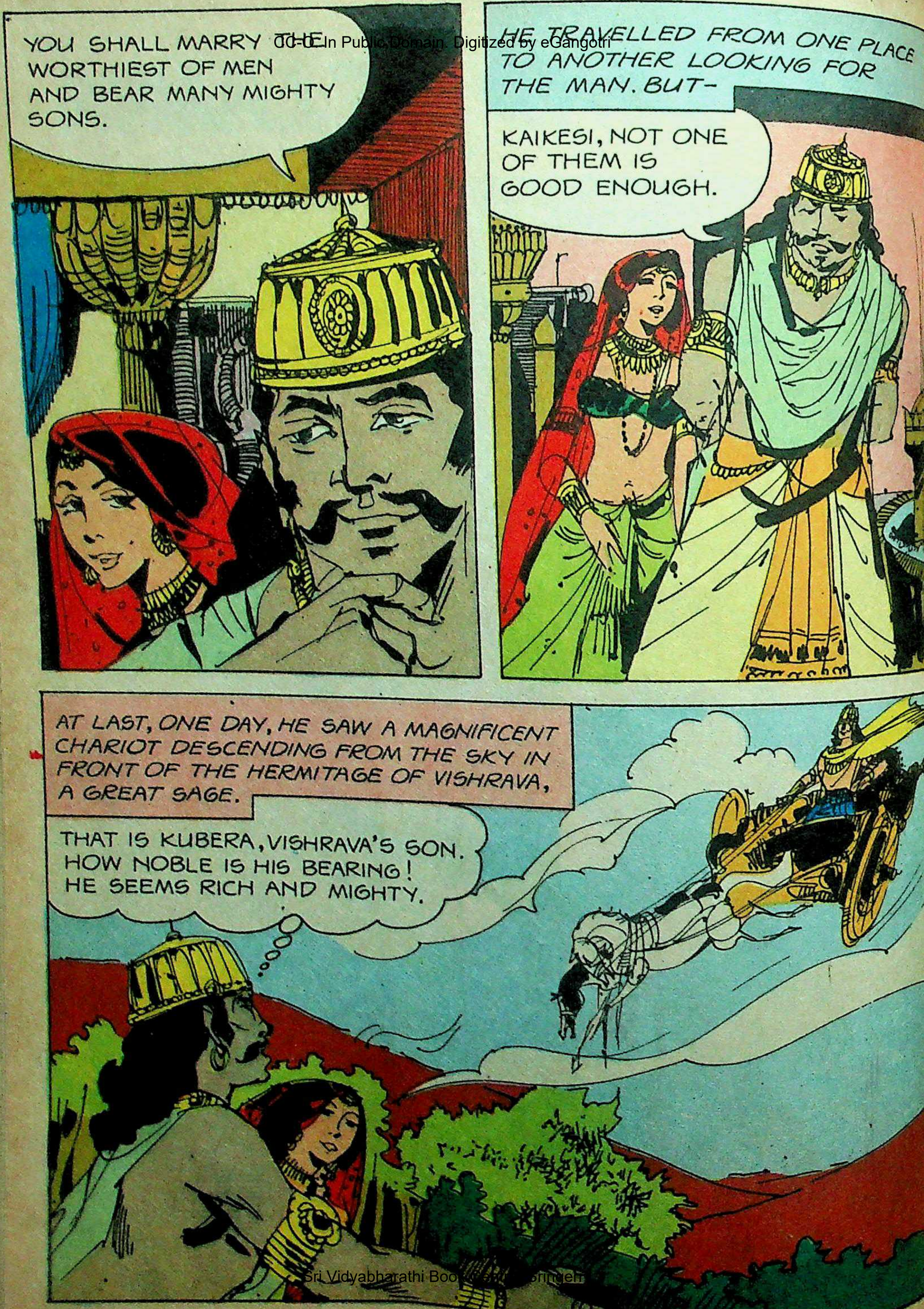
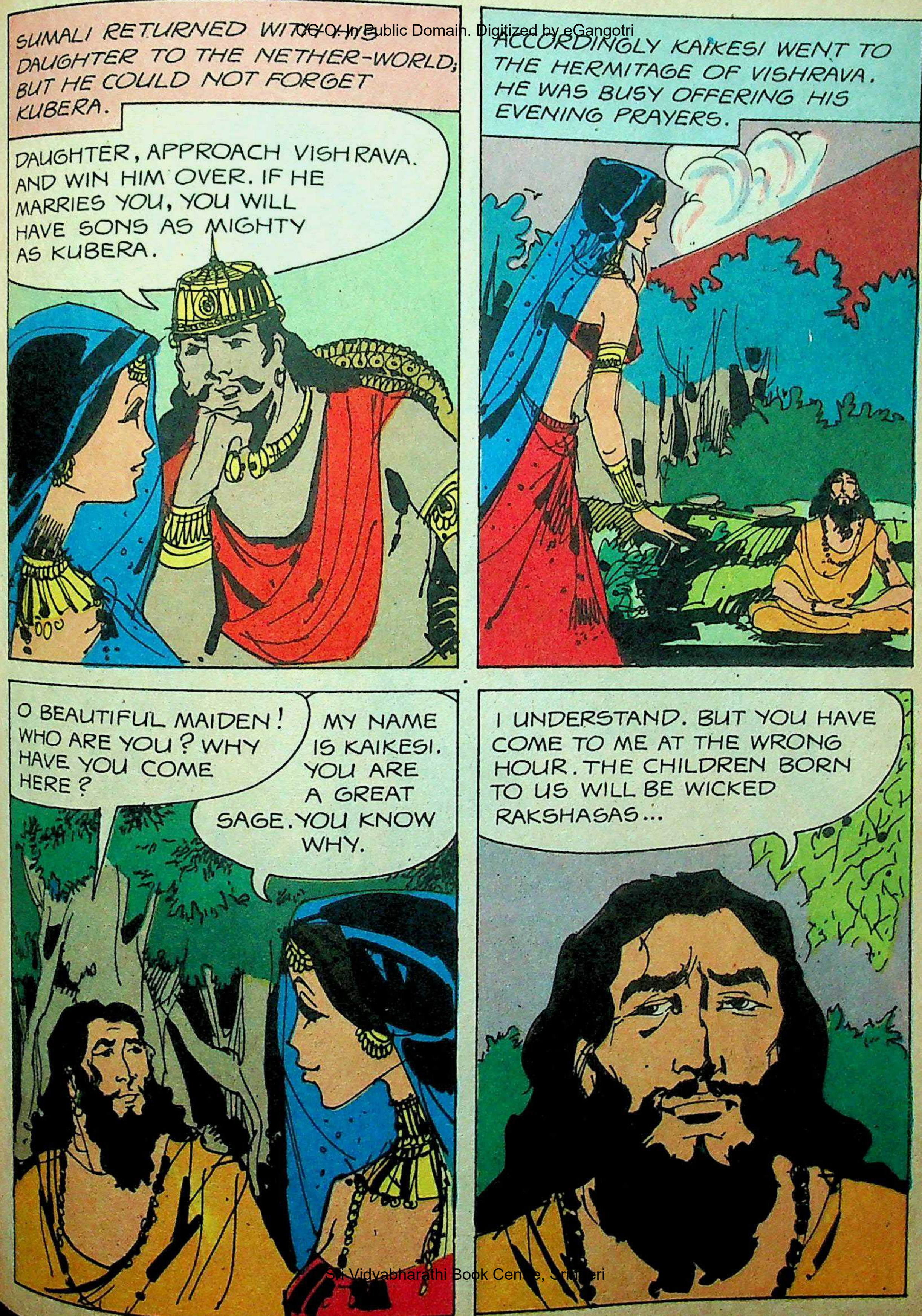
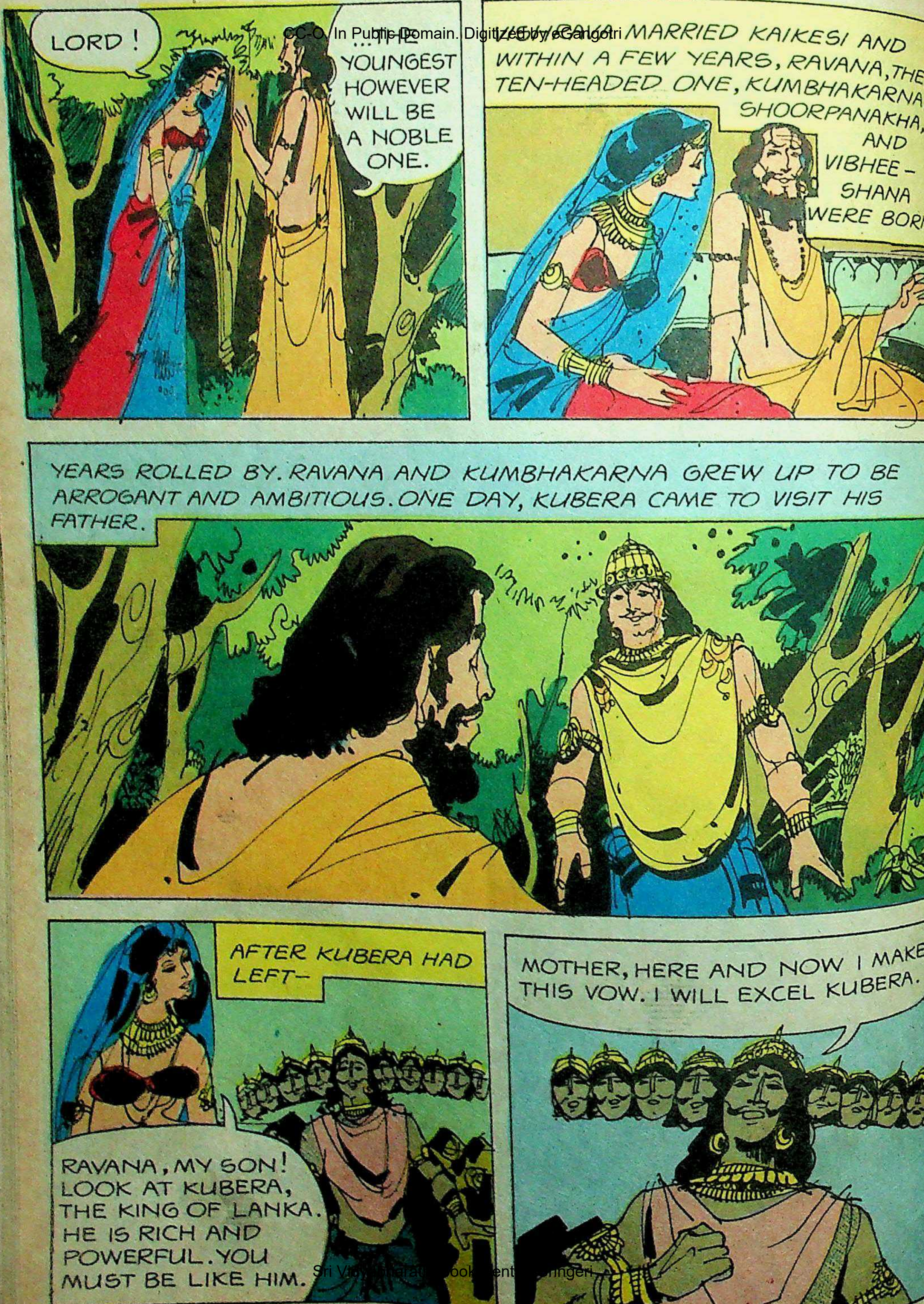
THE LORD OF LANKA


PULAK BISWAS
SUMALI WAS THE KING OF THE RAKSHASAS. FROM THE NETHER-WORLD, WHERE HE LIVED, HE ONCE CAME TO VISIT THE WORLD OF MEN, ALONG WITH HIS BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTER, KAIKESI.

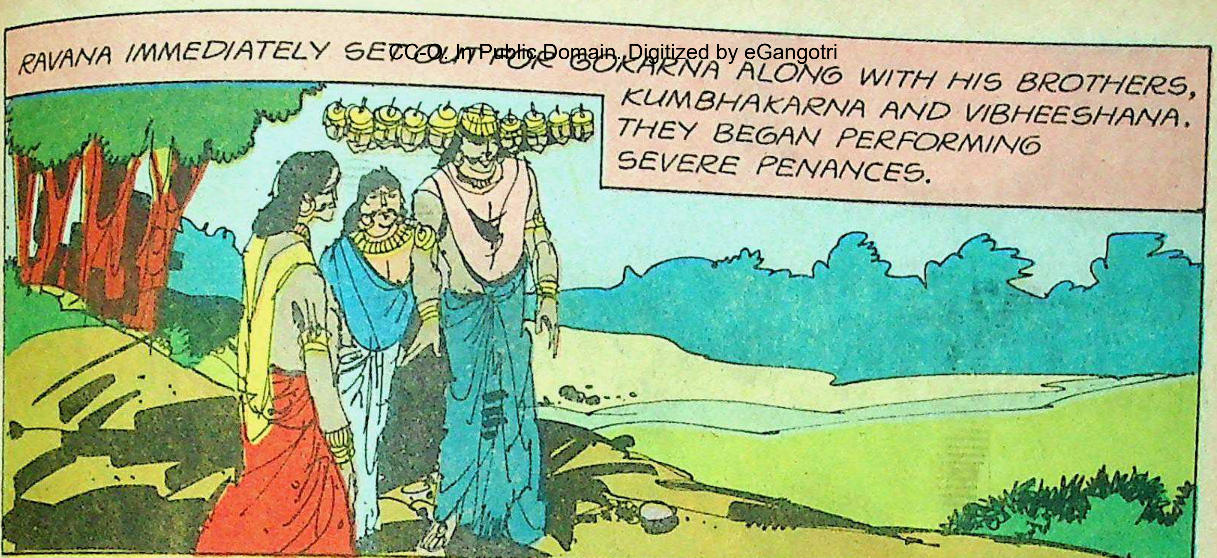

YOU SHALL MARRY THE WORTHIEST OF MEN AND BEAR MANY MIGHTY SONS.
HE TRAVELLED FROM ONE PLACE TO ANOTHER LOOKING FOR THE MAN. BUT–
KAIKESI, NOT ONE OF THEM IS GOOD ENOUGH.
AT LAST, ONE DAY, HE SAW A MAGNIFICENT CHARIOT DESCENDING FROM THE SKY IN FRONT OF THE HERMITAGE OF VISHRAVA, A GREAT SAGE.
THAT IS KUBERA, VISHRAVA'S SON. HOW NOBLE IS HIS BEARING! HE SEEMS RICH AND MIGHTY.

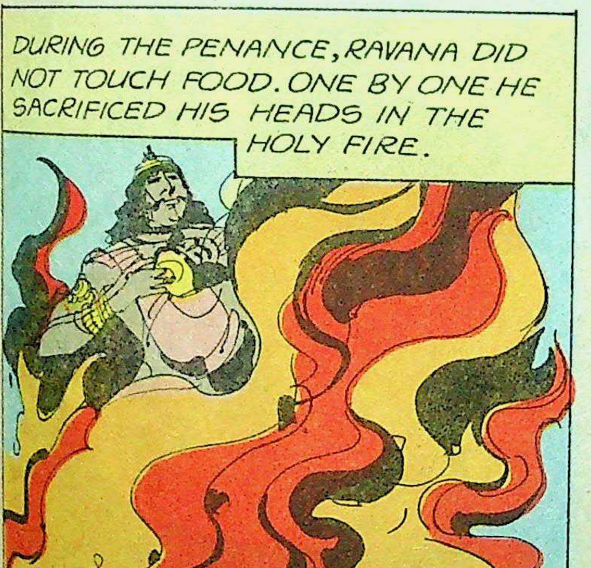
Sri Vidyabharathi Book... Sringeri

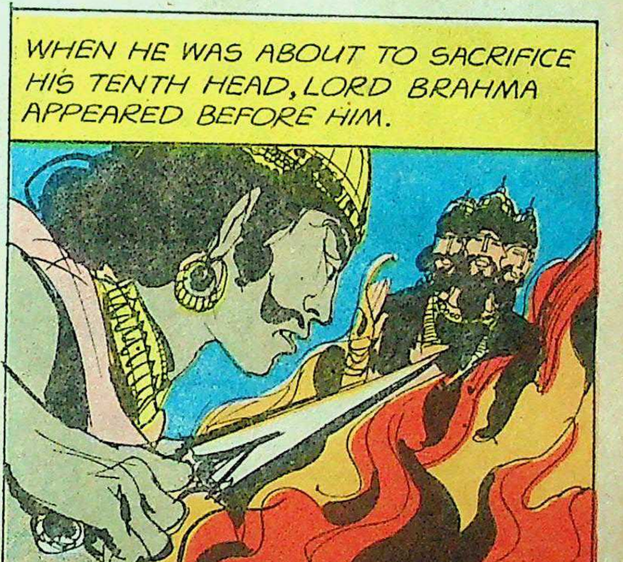

SUMALI RETURNED WITH HIS DAUGHTER TO THE NETHER-WORLD; BUT HE COULD NOT FORGET KUBERA.
DAUGHTER, APPROACH VISHRAVA. AND WIN HIM OVER. IF HE MARRIES YOU, YOU WILL HAVE SONS AS MIGHTY AS KUBERA.
ACCORDINGLY KAIKESI WENT TO THE HERMITAGE OF VISHRAVA. HE WAS BUSY OFFERING HIS EVENING PRAYERS.
O BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN! WHO ARE YOU? WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE?
MY NAME IS KAIKESI. YOU ARE A GREAT SAGE. YOU KNOW WHY.
I UNDERSTAND. BUT YOU HAVE COME TO ME AT THE WRONG HOUR. THE CHILDREN BORN TO US WILL BE WICKED RAKSHASAS...

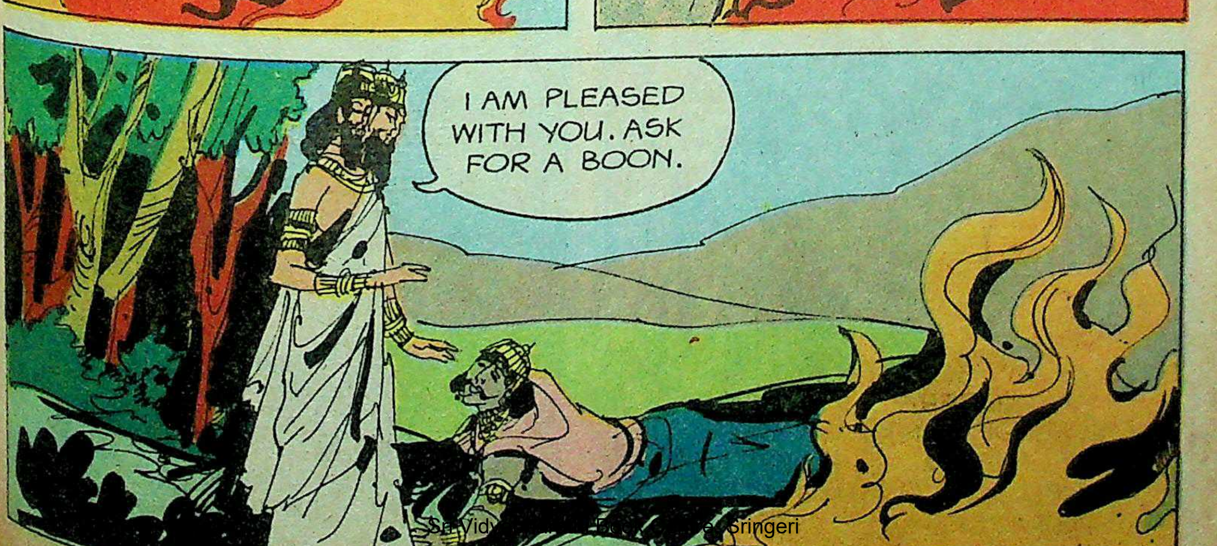

LORD !
...THE YOUNGEST HOWEVER WILL BE A NOBLE ONE.
VISHRAVA MARRIED KAIKESI AND WITHIN A FEW YEARS, RAVANA, THE TEN-HEADED ONE, KUMBHAKARNA, SHOORPANAKHA, AND VIBHEESHANA WERE BORN.
YEARS ROLLED BY. RAVANA AND KUMBHAKARNA GREW UP TO BE ARROGANT AND AMBITIOUS. ONE DAY, KUBERA CAME TO VISIT HIS FATHER.
AFTER KUBERA HAD LEFT–
RAVANA, MY SON! LOOK AT KUBERA, THE KING OF LANKA. HE IS RICH AND POWERFUL. YOU MUST BE LIKE HIM.
MOTHER, HERE AND NOW I MAKE THIS VOW. I WILL EXCEL KUBERA.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book [illegible] Sringeri

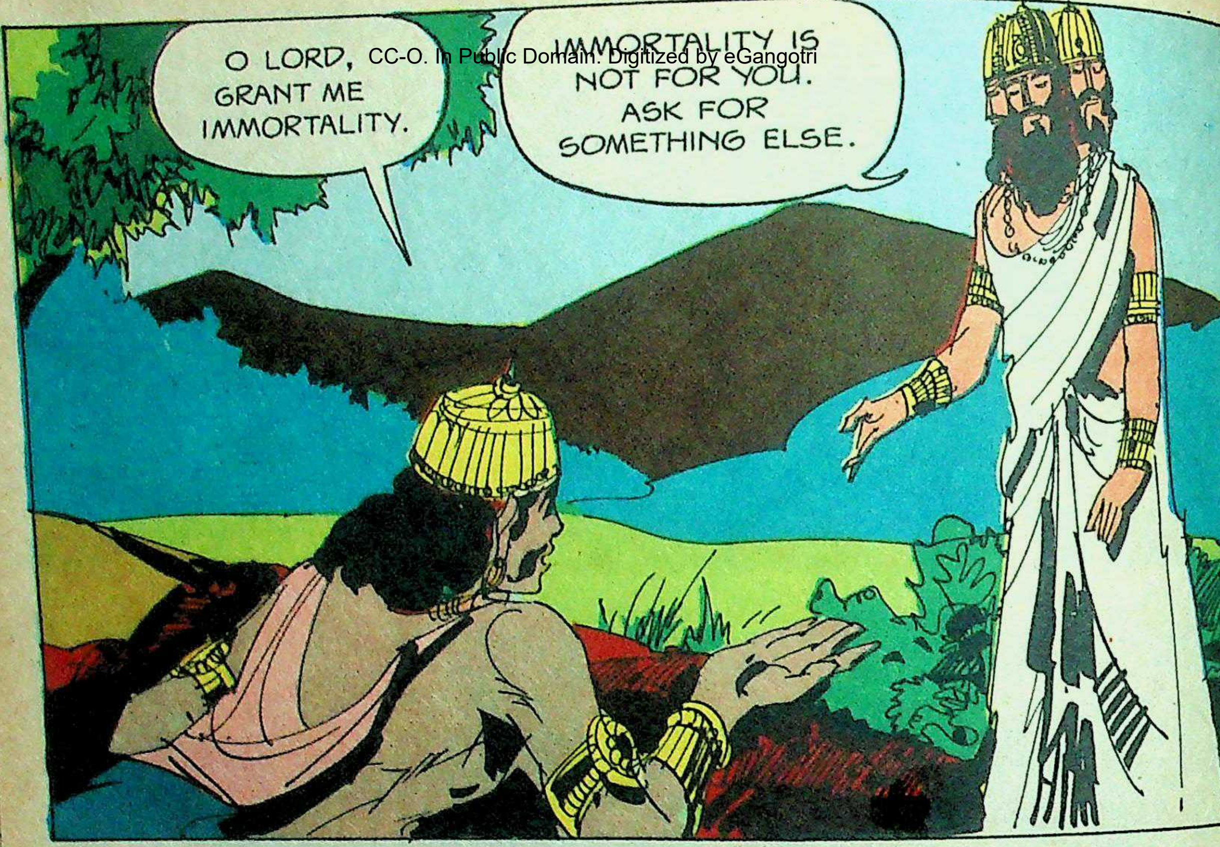

RAVANA IMMEDIATELY SET OUT FOR GOKARNA ALONG WITH HIS BROTHERS, KUMBHAKARNA AND VIBHEESHANA. THEY BEGAN PERFORMING SEVERE PENANCES.

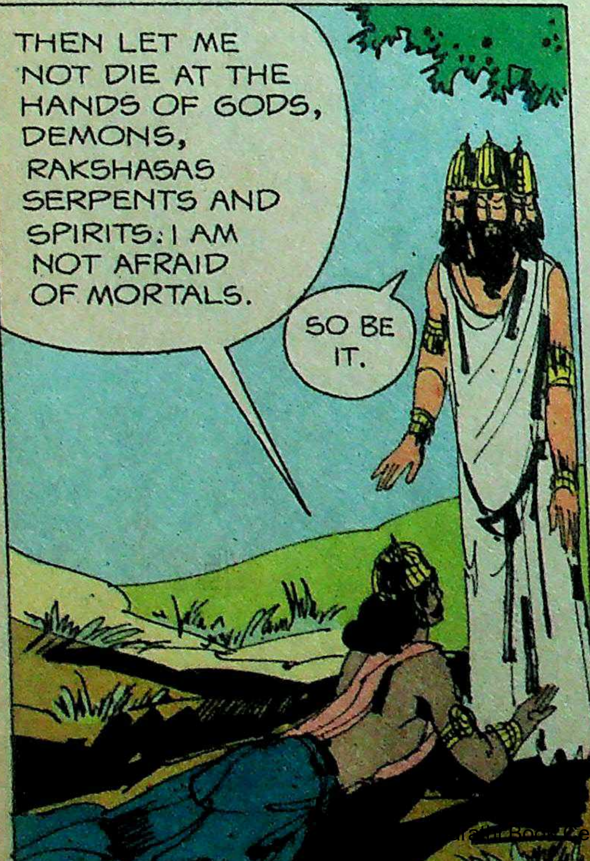

DURING THE PENANCE, RAVANA DID NOT TOUCH FOOD. ONE BY ONE HE SACRIFICED HIS HEADS IN THE HOLY FIRE.

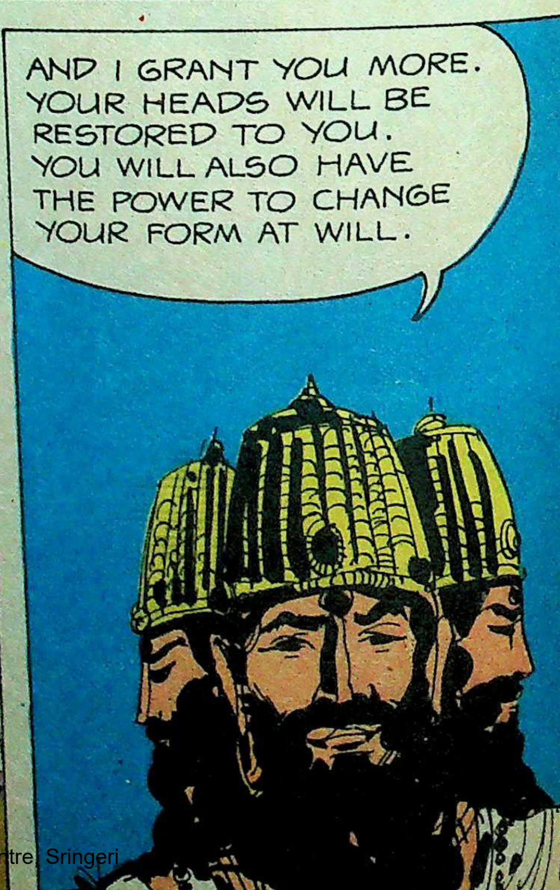

WHEN HE WAS ABOUT TO SACRIFICE HIS TENTH HEAD, LORD BRAHMA APPEARED BEFORE HIM.

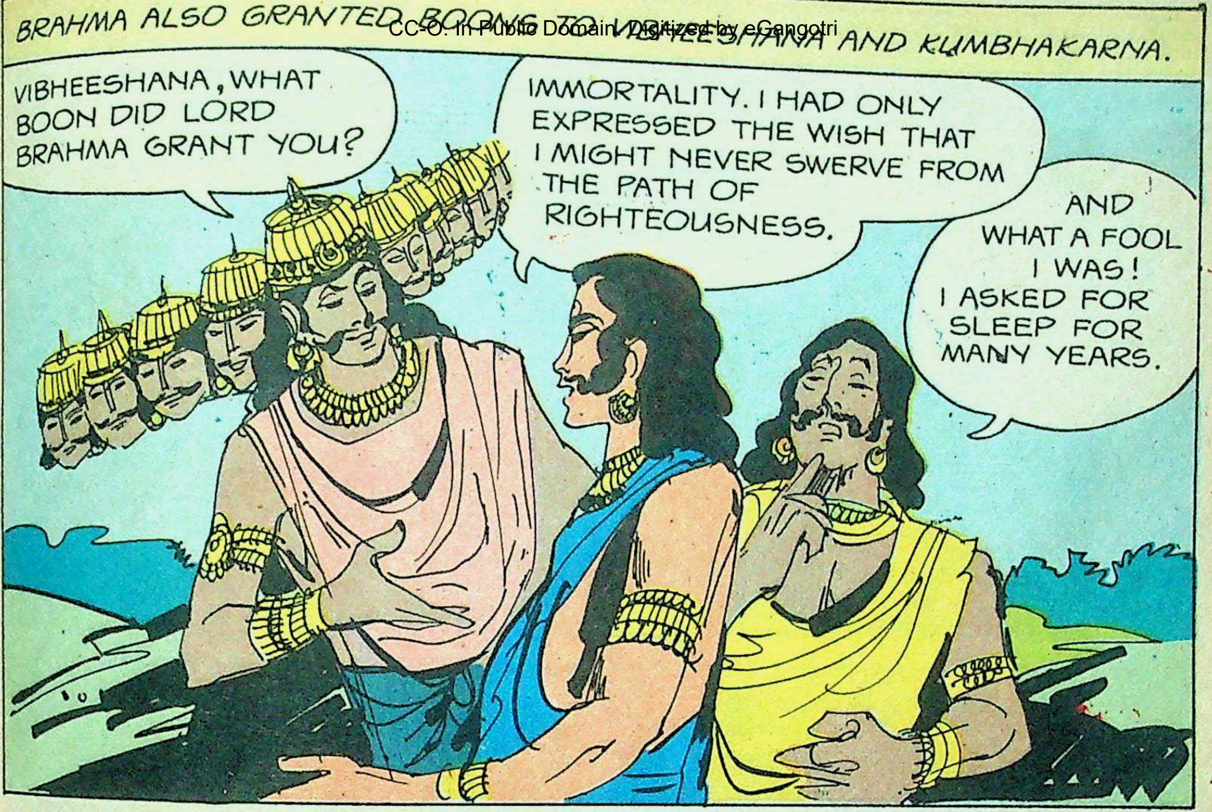

I AM PLEASED WITH YOU. ASK FOR A BOON.

Sri Vid Sringeri

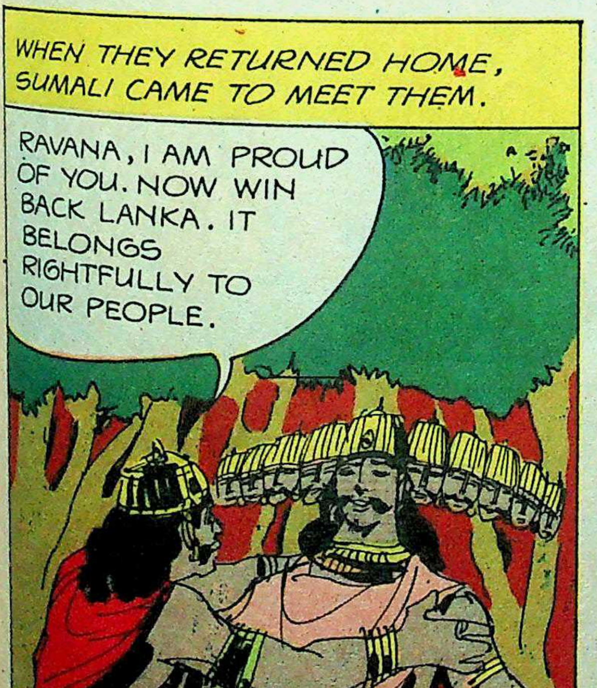

O LORD, GRANT ME IMMORTALITY.
IMMORTALITY IS NOT FOR YOU. ASK FOR SOMETHING ELSE.


THEN LET ME NOT DIE AT THE HANDS OF GODS, DEMONS, RAKSHASAS SERPENTS AND SPIRITS: I AM NOT AFRAID OF MORTALS.
SO BE IT.

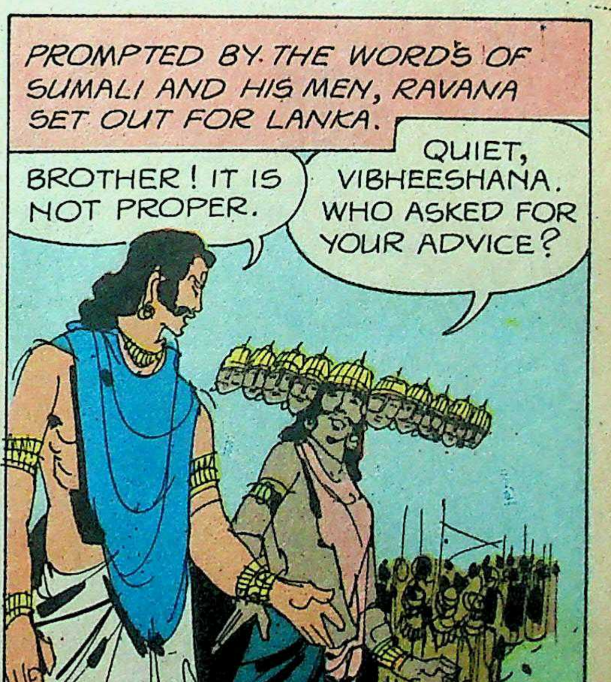

AND I GRANT YOU MORE. YOUR HEADS WILL BE RESTORED TO YOU. YOU WILL ALSO HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE YOUR FORM AT WILL.


BRAHMA ALSO GRANTED BOONS TO VIBHEESHANA AND KUMBHAKARNA.

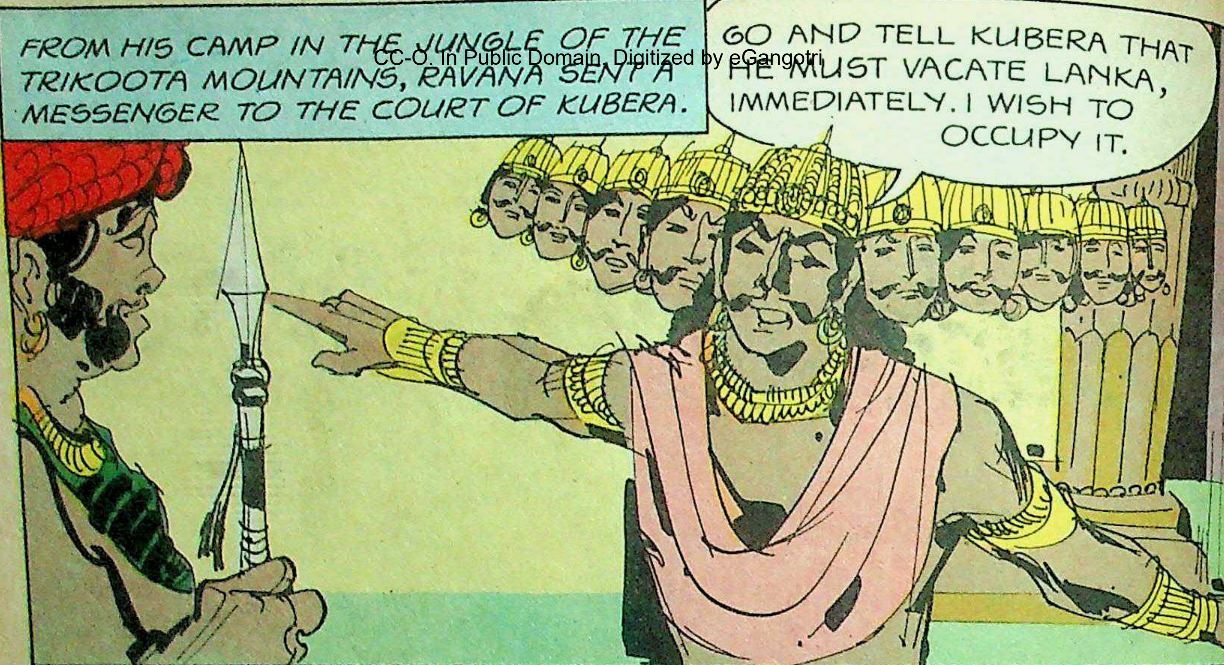
VIBHEESHANA, WHAT BOON DID LORD BRAHMA GRANT YOU?
IMMORTALITY. I HAD ONLY EXPRESSED THE WISH THAT I MIGHT NEVER SWERVE FROM THE PATH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.
AND WHAT A FOOL I WAS! I ASKED FOR SLEEP FOR MANY YEARS.

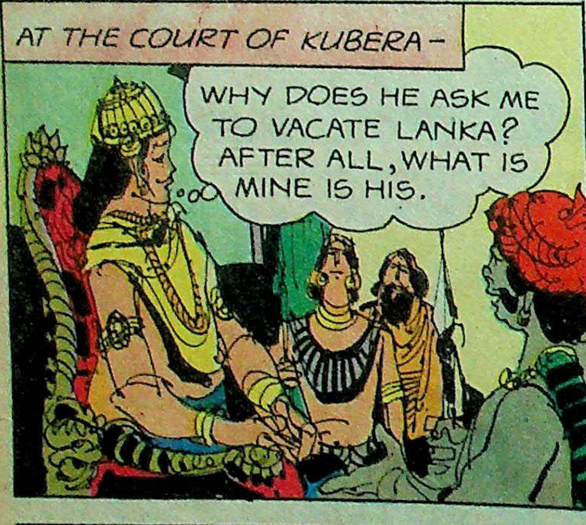

WHEN THEY RETURNED HOME, SUMALI CAME TO MEET THEM.

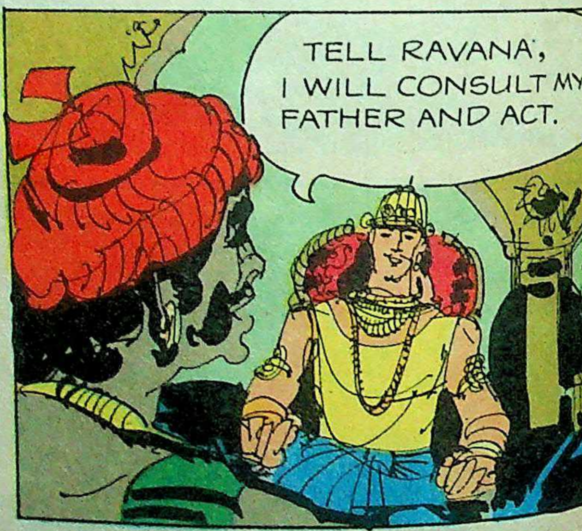
RAVANA, I AM PROUD OF YOU. NOW WIN BACK LANKA. IT BELONGS RIGHTFULLY TO OUR PEOPLE.

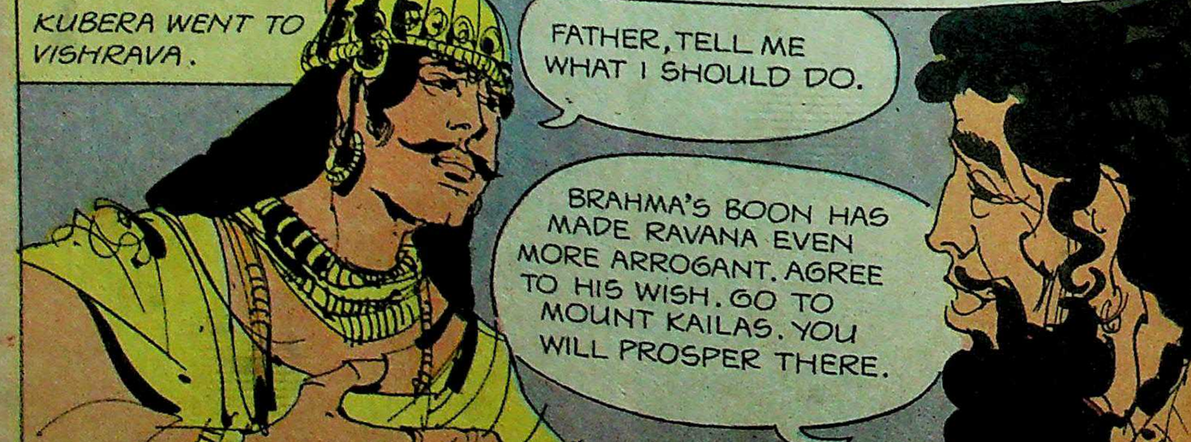

PROMPTED BY THE WORDS OF SUMALI AND HIS MEN, RAVANA SET OUT FOR LANKA.

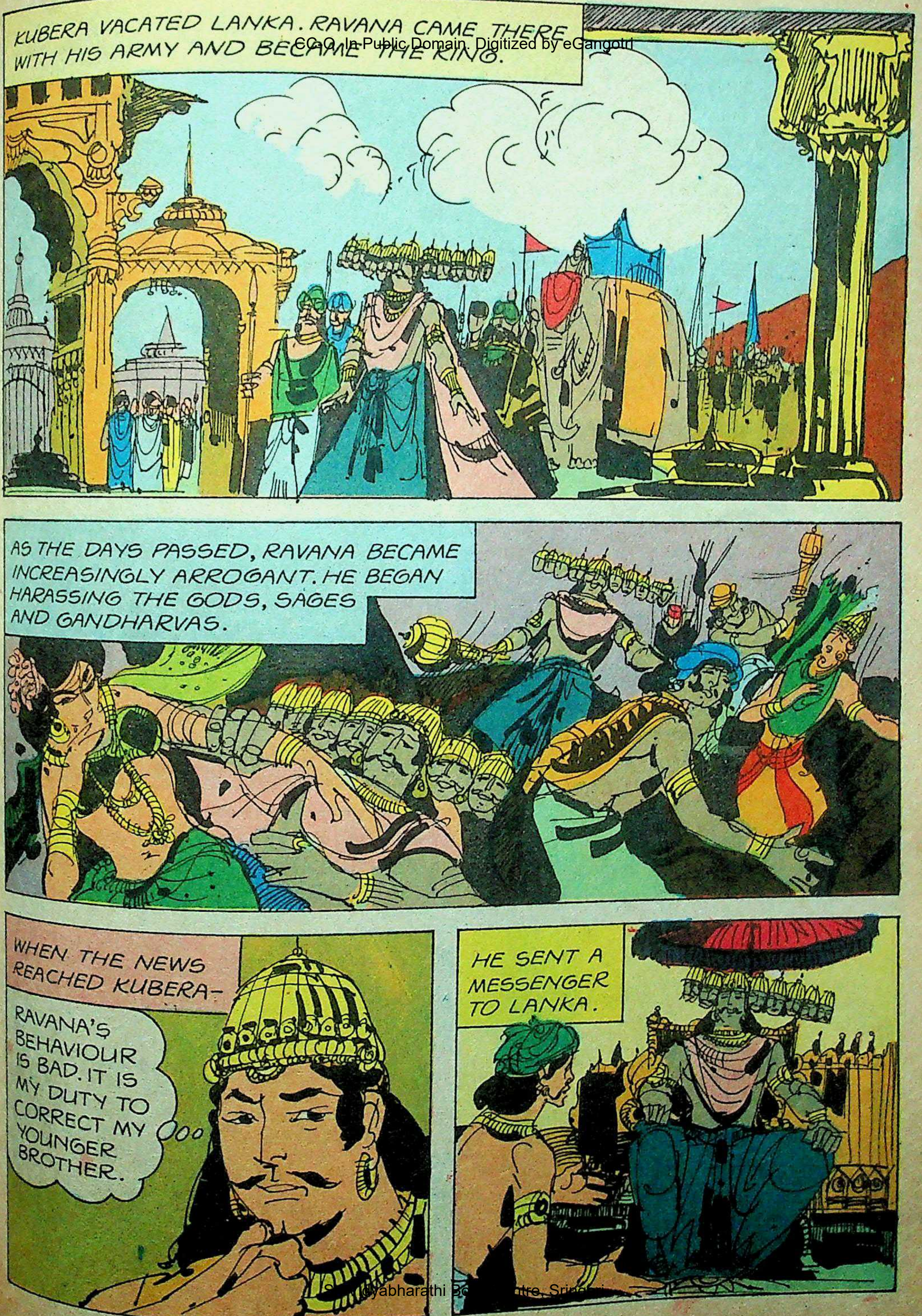
BROTHER! IT IS NOT PROPER.
QUIET, VIBHEESHANA. WHO ASKED FOR YOUR ADVICE?

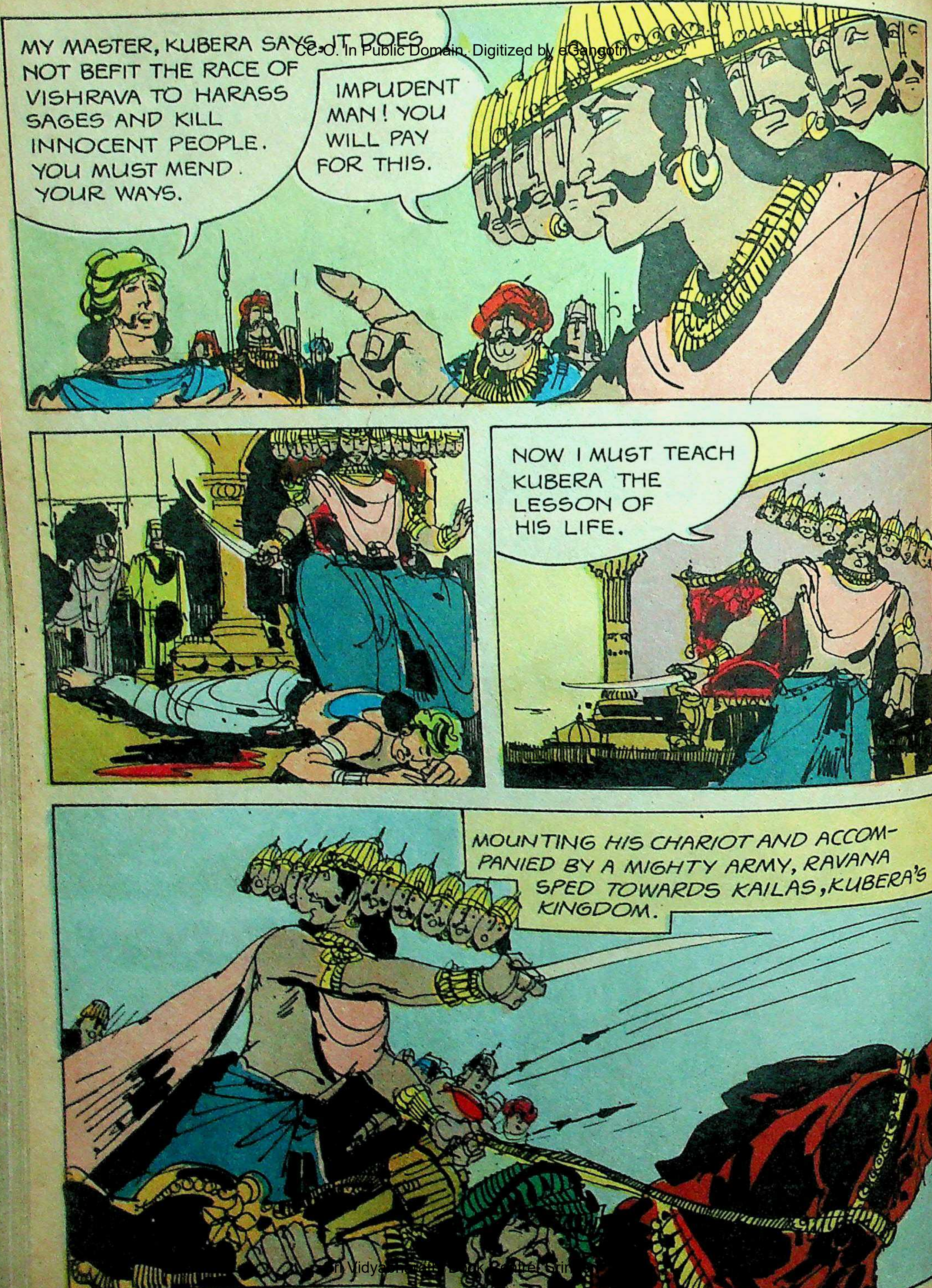

FROM HIS CAMP IN THE JUNGLE OF THE TRIKOOTA MOUNTAINS, RAVANA SENT A MESSENGER TO THE COURT OF KUBERA.
GO AND TELL KUBERA THAT HE MUST VACATE LANKA, IMMEDIATELY. I WISH TO OCCUPY IT.


AT THE COURT OF KUBERA–
WHY DOES HE ASK ME TO VACATE LANKA? AFTER ALL, WHAT IS MINE IS HIS.

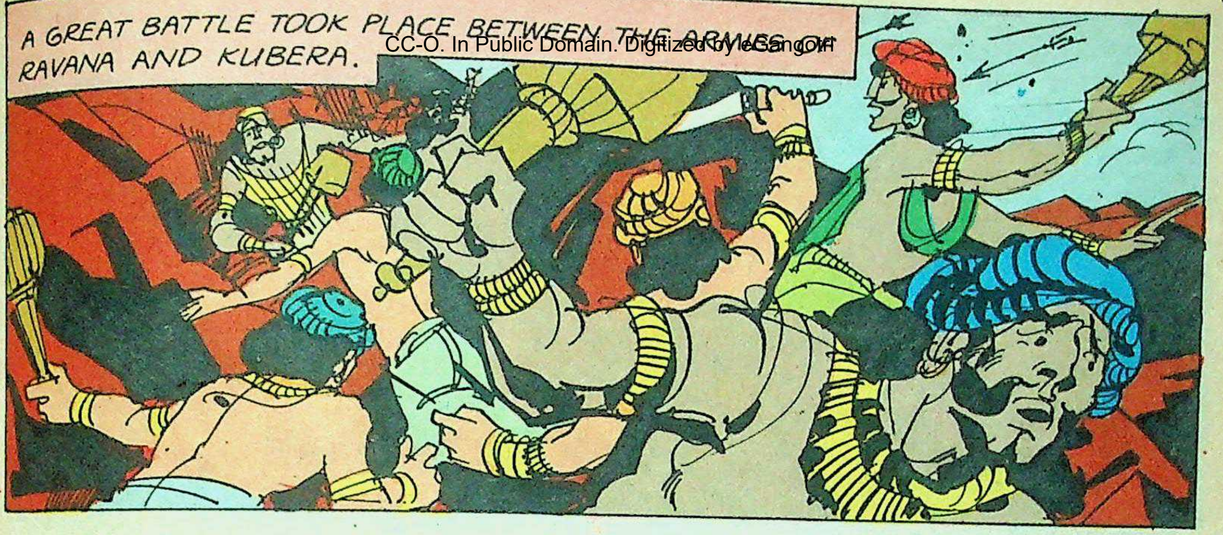

TELL RAVANA, I WILL CONSULT MY FATHER AND ACT.


KUBERA WENT TO VISHRAVA.
FATHER, TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD DO.
BRAHMA'S BOON HAS MADE RAVANA EVEN MORE ARROGANT. AGREE TO HIS WISH. GO TO MOUNT KAILAS. YOU WILL PROSPER THERE.

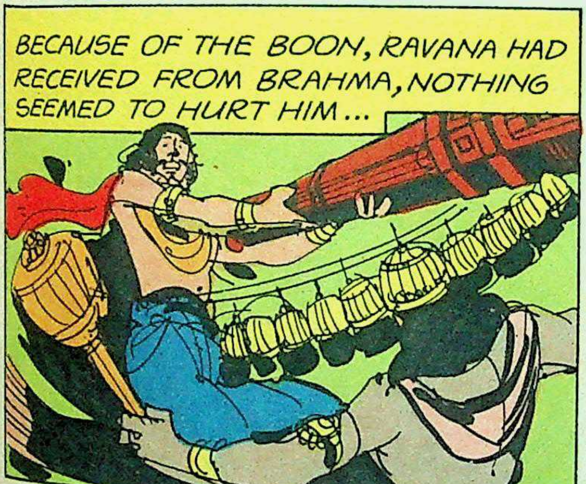

KUBERA VACATED LANKA. RAVANA CAME THERE WITH HIS ARMY AND BECAME THE KING.
AS THE DAYS PASSED, RAVANA BECAME INCREASINGLY ARROGANT. HE BEGAN HARASSING THE GODS, SAGES AND GANDHARVAS.
WHEN THE NEWS REACHED KUBERA–
RAVANA'S BEHAVIOUR IS BAD. IT IS MY DUTY TO CORRECT MY YOUNGER BROTHER.
HE SENT A MESSENGER TO LANKA.


MY MASTER, KUBERA SAYS IT DOES NOT BEFIT THE RACE OF VISHRAVA TO HARASS SAGES AND KILL INNOCENT PEOPLE. YOU MUST MEND YOUR WAYS.
IMPUDENT MAN! YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS.
NOW I MUST TEACH KUBERA THE LESSON OF HIS LIFE.
MOUNTING HIS CHARIOT AND ACCOMPANIED BY A MIGHTY ARMY, RAVANA SPED TOWARDS KAILAS, KUBERA'S KINGDOM.

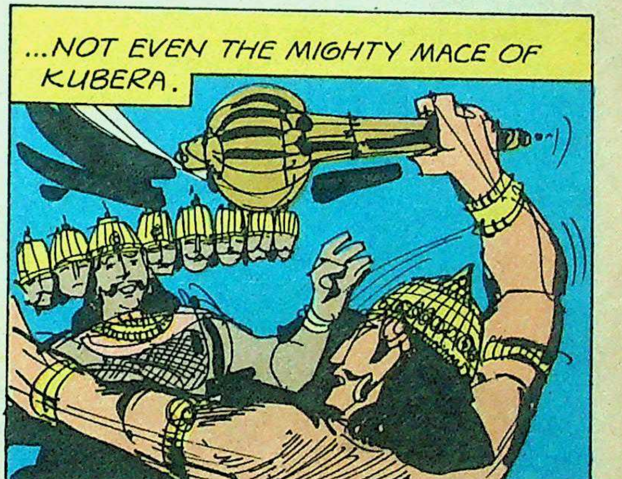
A GREAT BATTLE TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE ARMIES OF RAVANA AND KUBERA.



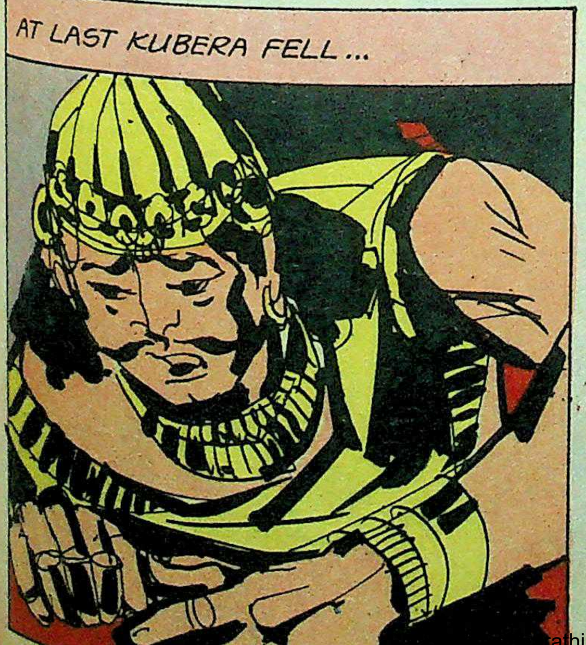
BECAUSE OF THE BOON, RAVANA HAD RECEIVED FROM BRAHMA, NOTHING SEEMED TO HURT HIM ...



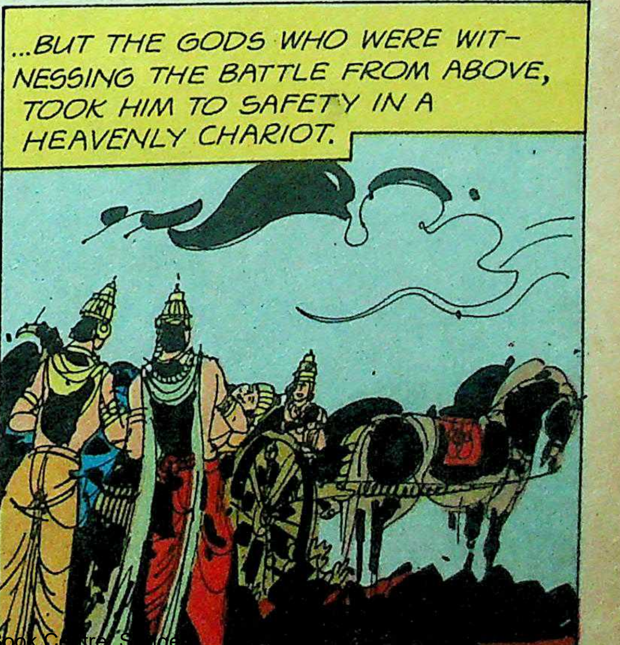
...NOT EVEN THE MIGHTY MACE OF KUBERA.

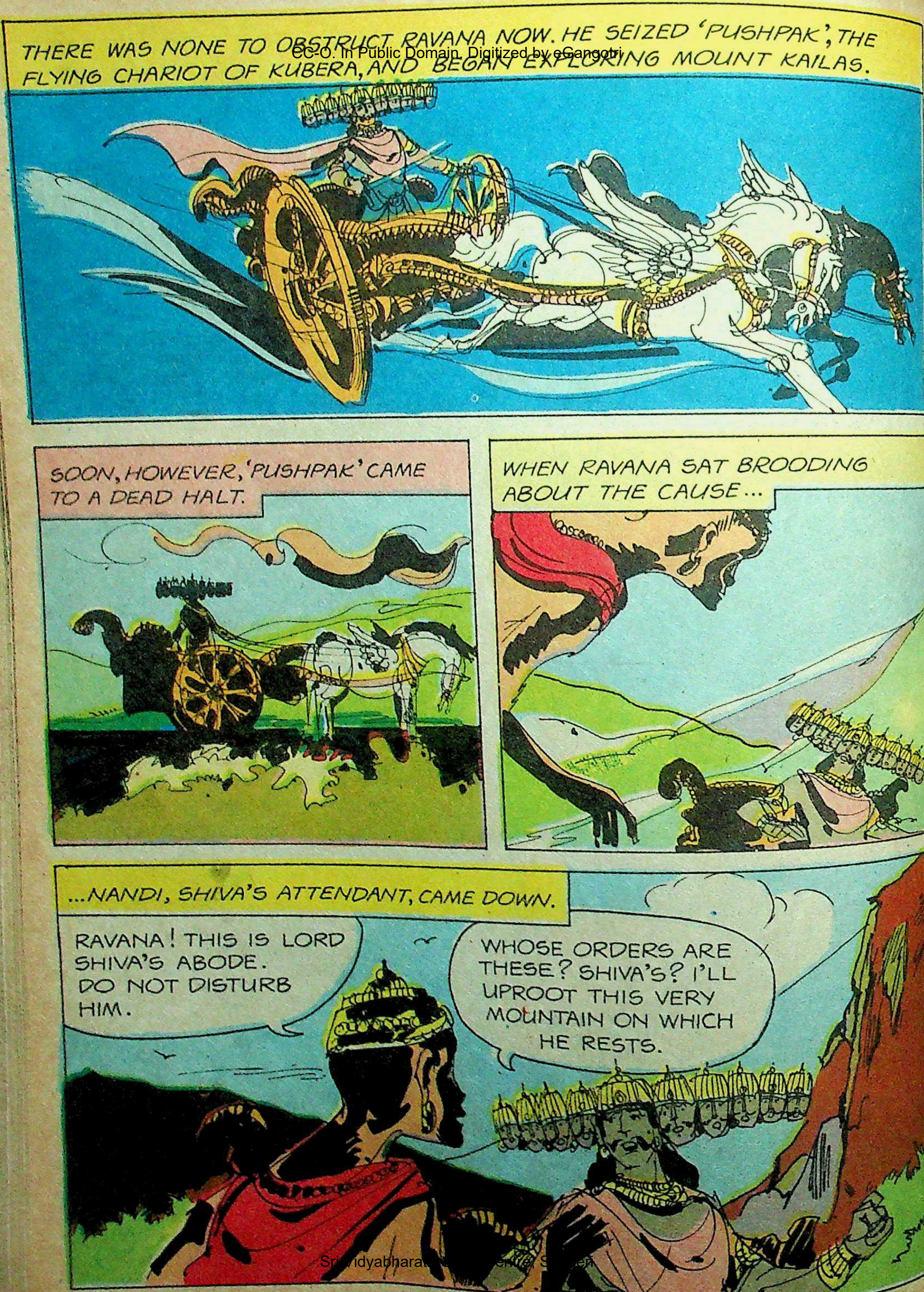


AT LAST KUBERA FELL ...

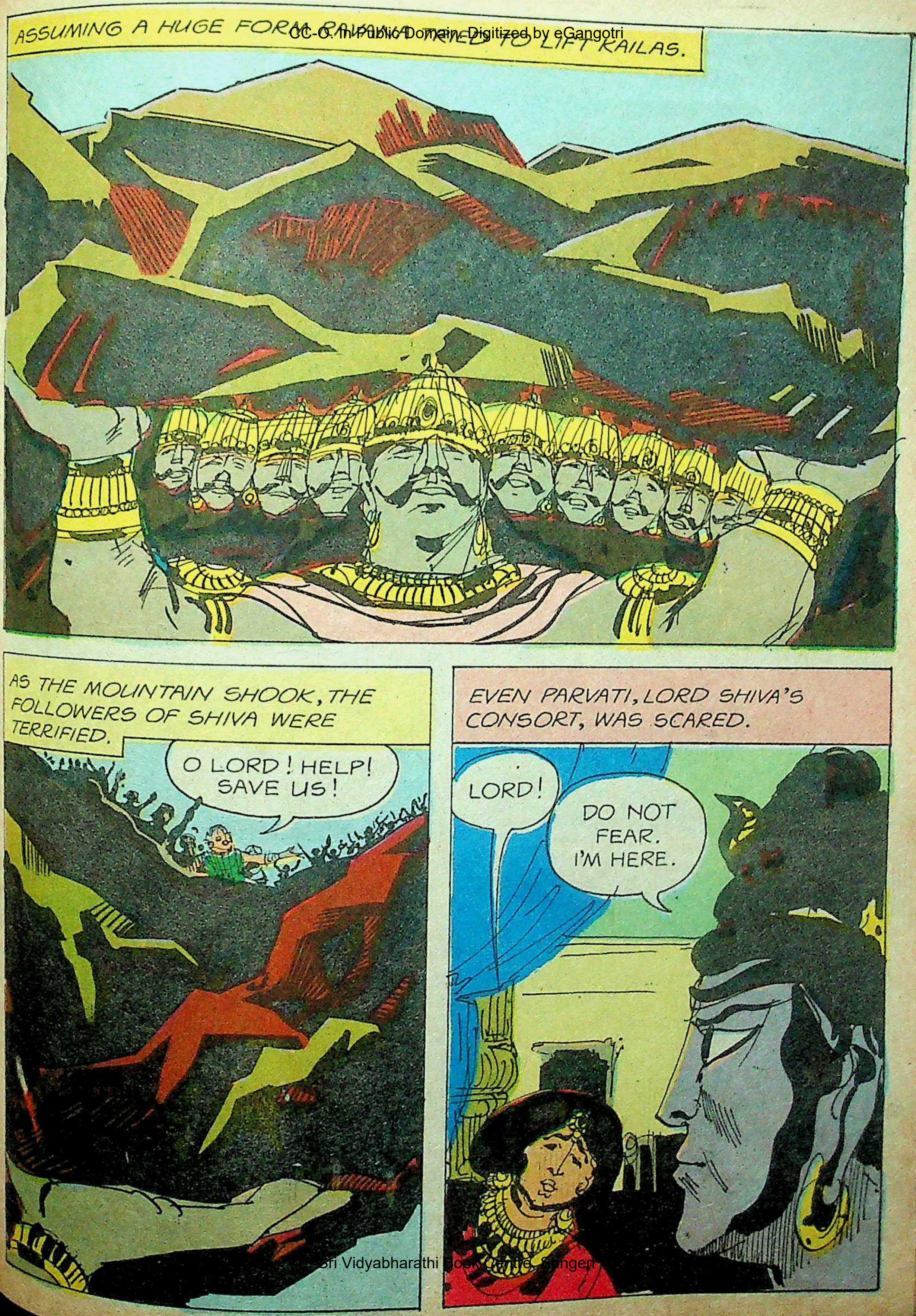


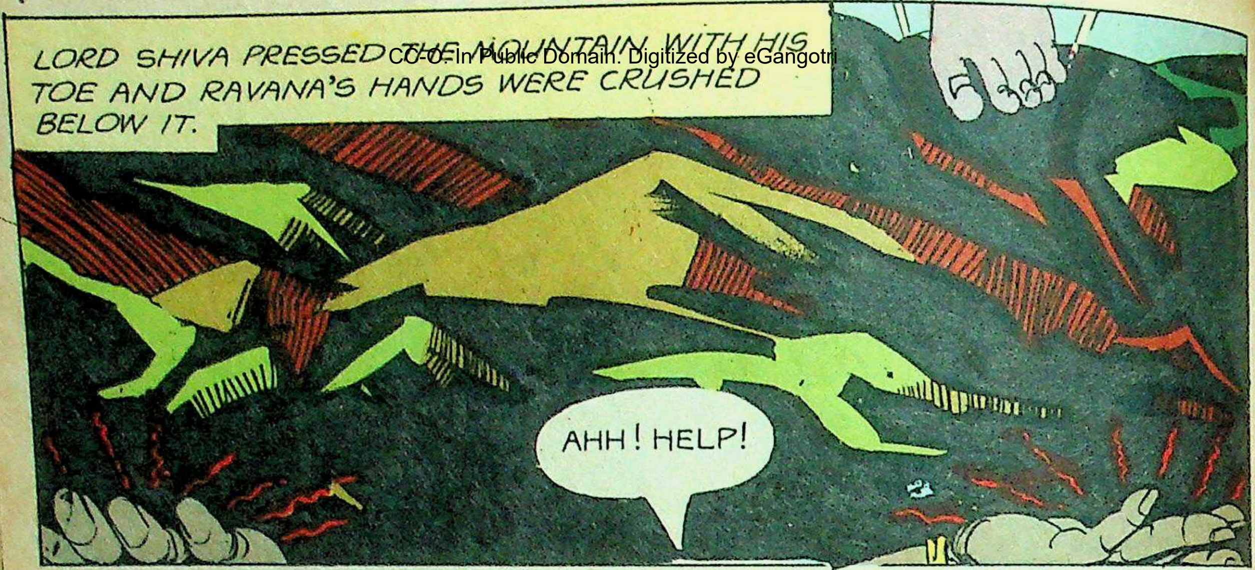
...BUT THE GODS WHO WERE WITNESSING THE BATTLE FROM ABOVE, TOOK HIM TO SAFETY IN A HEAVENLY CHARIOT.

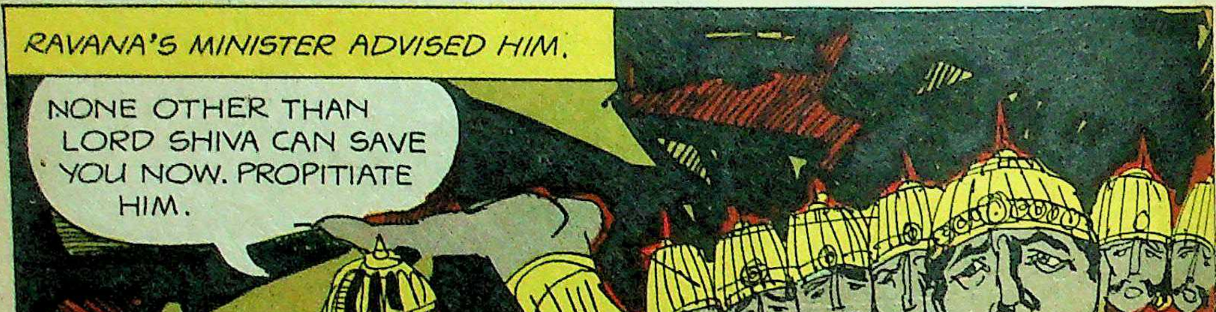


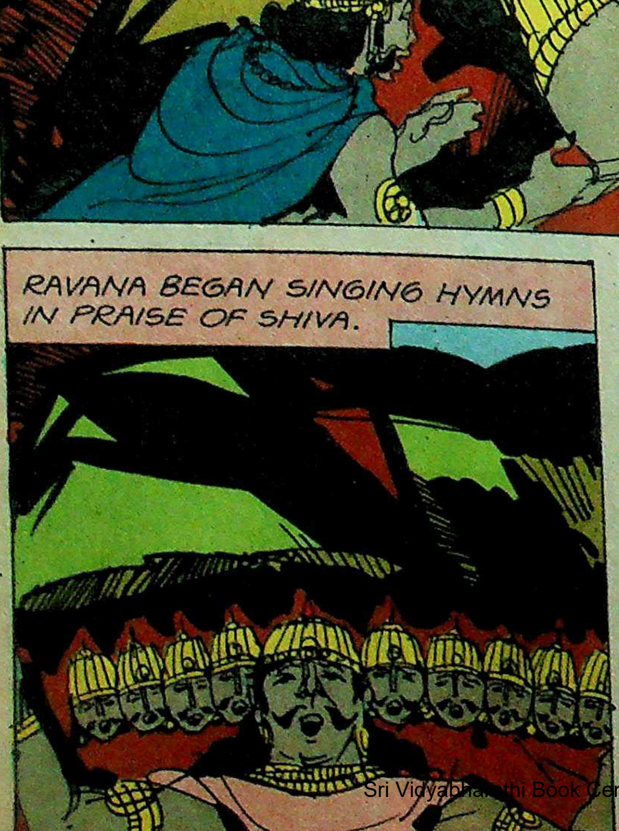

THERE WAS NONE TO OBSTRUCT RAVANA NOW. HE SEIZED 'PUSHPAK', THE FLYING CHARIOT OF KUBERA, AND BEGAN EXPLORING MOUNT KAILAS.
SOON, HOWEVER, 'PUSHPAK' CAME TO A DEAD HALT.
WHEN RAVANA SAT BROODING ABOUT THE CAUSE...
...NANDI, SHIVA'S ATTENDANT, CAME DOWN.
RAVANA! THIS IS LORD SHIVA'S ABODE. DO NOT DISTURB HIM.
WHOSE ORDERS ARE THESE? SHIVA'S? I'LL UPROOT THIS VERY MOUNTAIN ON WHICH HE RESTS.

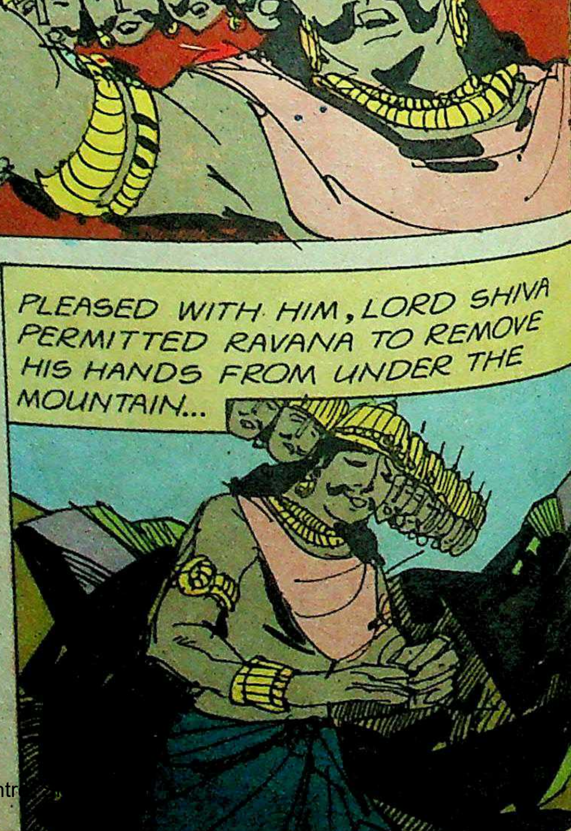
Sri Vidyabharati ... Centre, S...

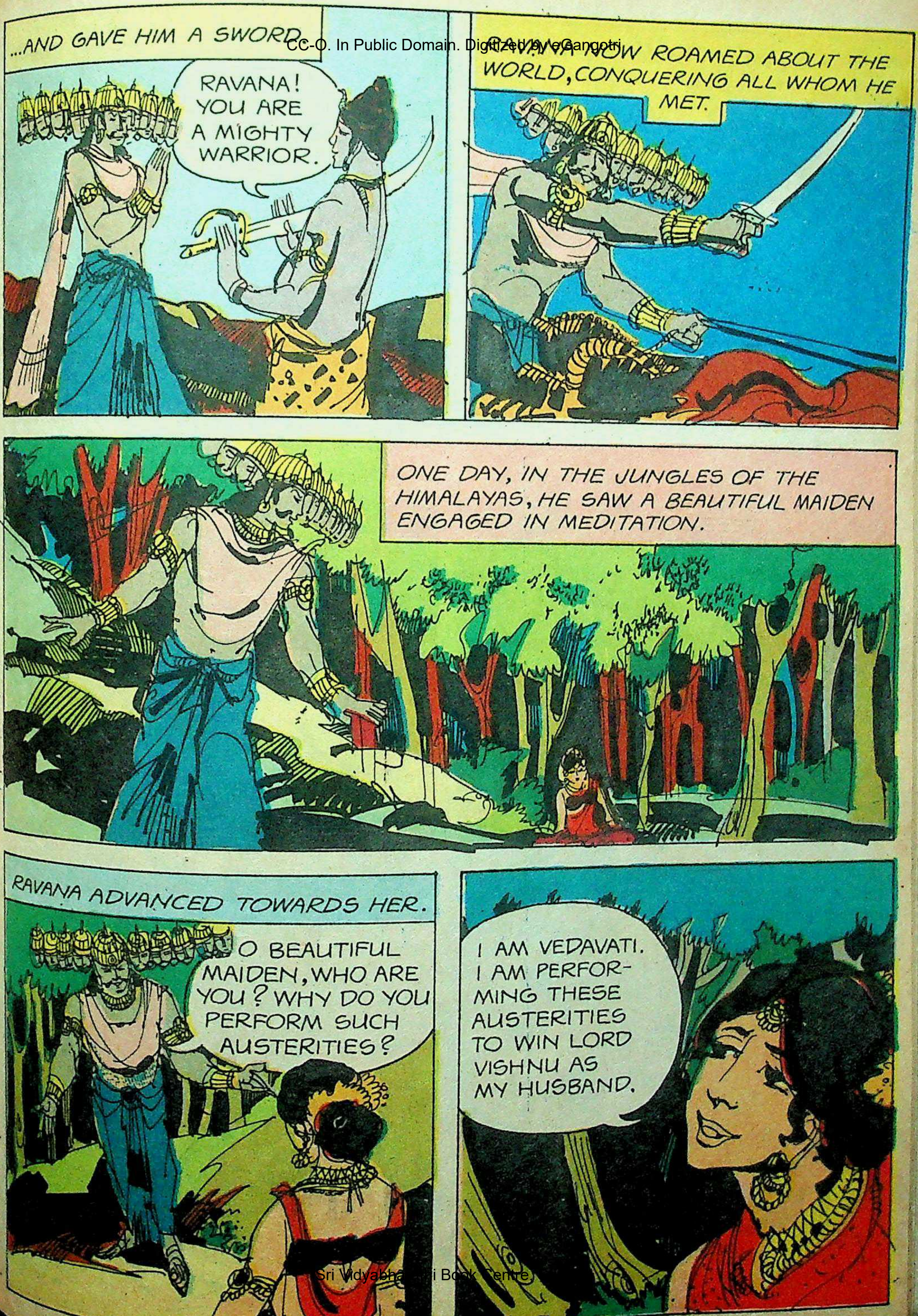

ASSUMING A HUGE FORM RAVANA TRIED TO LIFT KAILAS.
AS THE MOUNTAIN SHOOK, THE FOLLOWERS OF SHIVA WERE TERRIFIED.
O LORD! HELP! SAVE US!
EVEN PARVATI, LORD SHIVA'S CONSORT, WAS SCARED.
LORD!
DO NOT FEAR. I'M HERE.


LORD SHIVA PRESSED THE MOUNTAIN WITH HIS TOE AND RAVANA'S HANDS WERE CRUSHED BELOW IT.
AHH! HELP!


RAVANA'S MINISTER ADVISED HIM.
NONE OTHER THAN LORD SHIVA CAN SAVE YOU NOW. PROPITIATE HIM.


RAVANA BEGAN SINGING HYMNS IN PRAISE OF SHIVA.


PLEASED WITH HIM, LORD SHIVA PERMITTED RAVANA TO REMOVE HIS HANDS FROM UNDER THE MOUNTAIN...


...AND GAVE HIM A SWORD.
RAVANA! YOU ARE A MIGHTY WARRIOR.
RAVANA NOW ROAMED ABOUT THE WORLD, CONQUERING ALL WHOM HE MET.
ONE DAY, IN THE JUNGLES OF THE HIMALAYAS, HE SAW A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN ENGAGED IN MEDITATION.
RAVANA ADVANCED TOWARDS HER.
O BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN, WHO ARE YOU? WHY DO YOU PERFORM SUCH AUSTERITIES?
I AM VEDAVATI. I AM PERFORMING THESE AUSTERITIES TO WIN LORD VISHNU AS MY HUSBAND.

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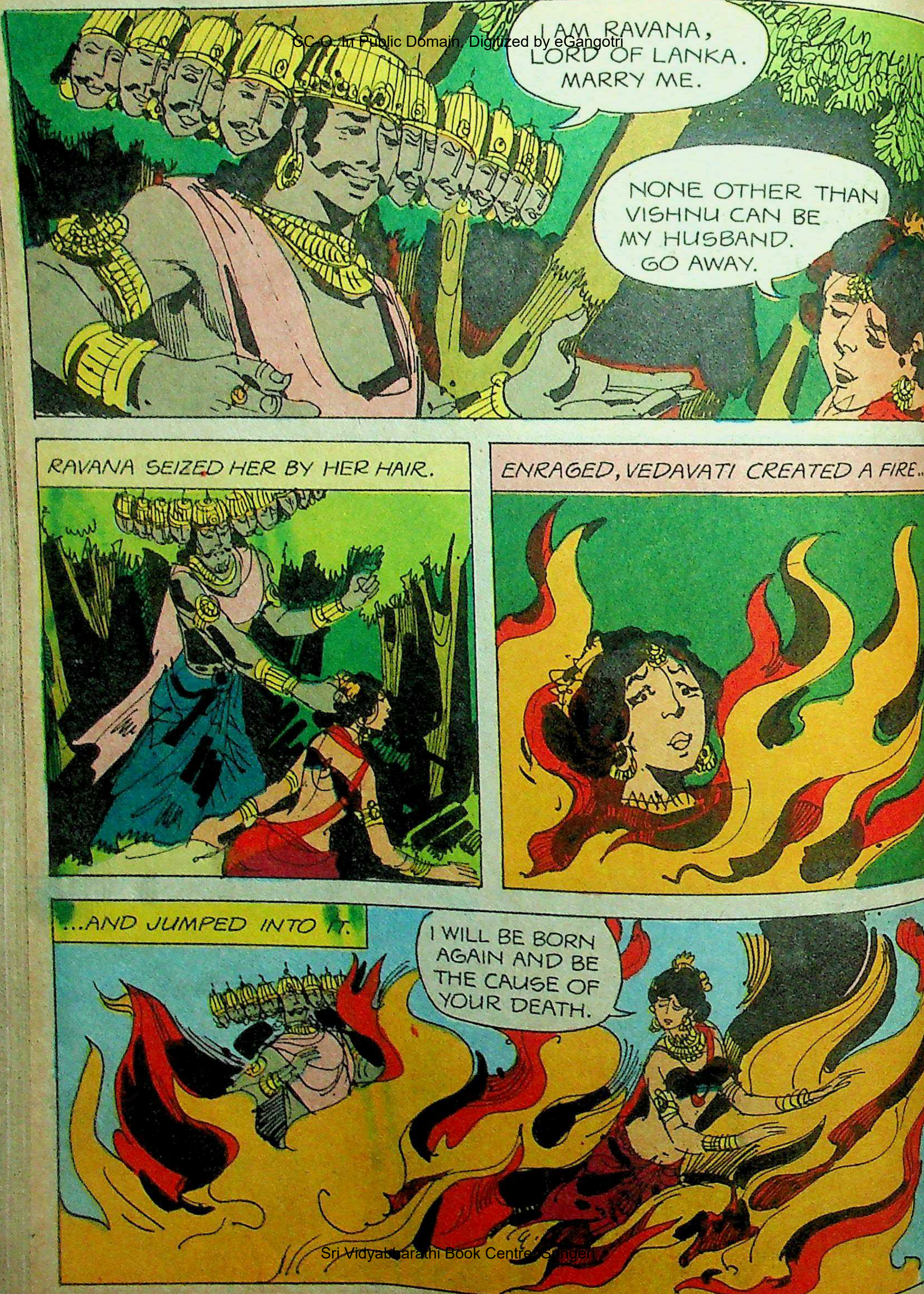
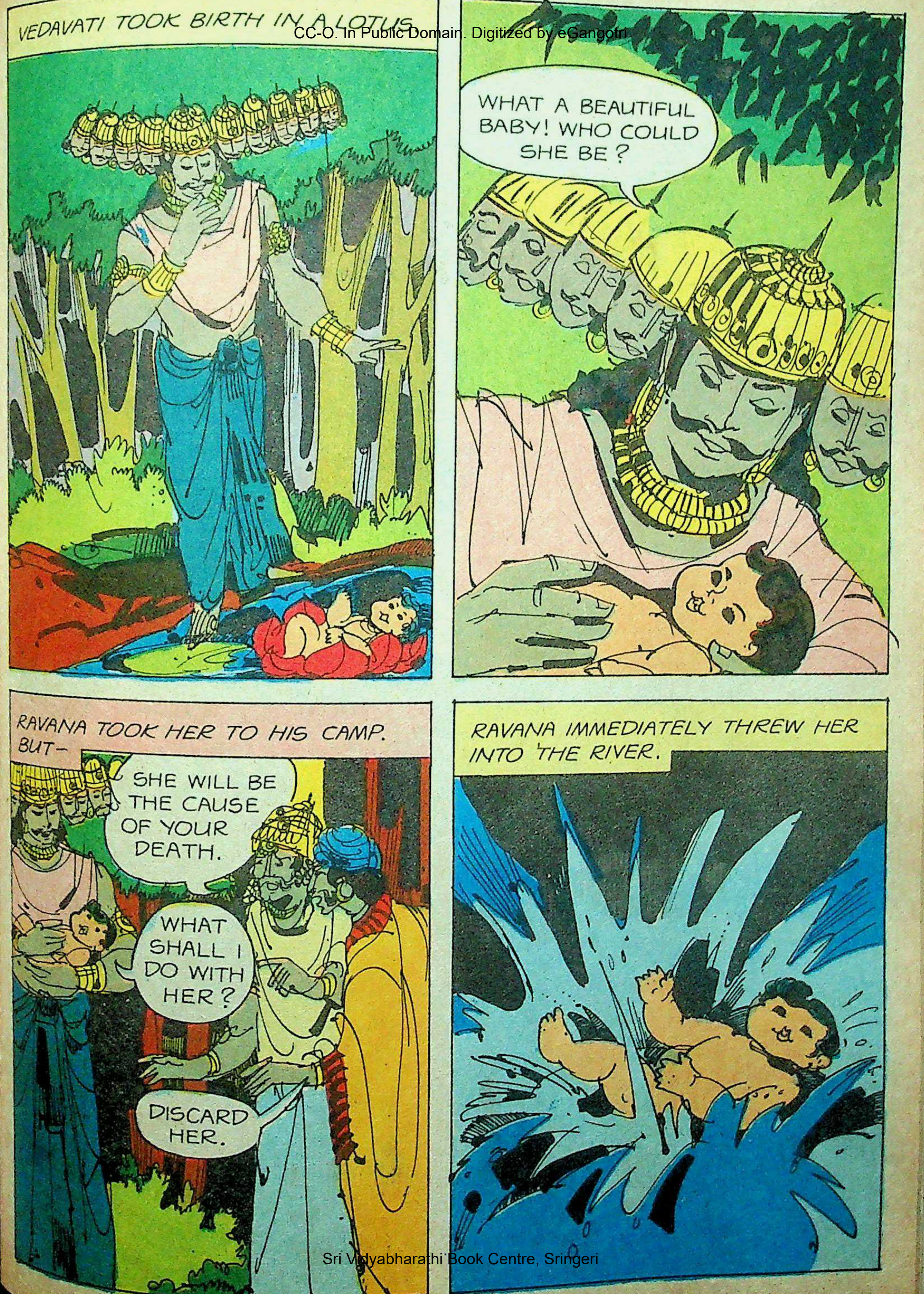
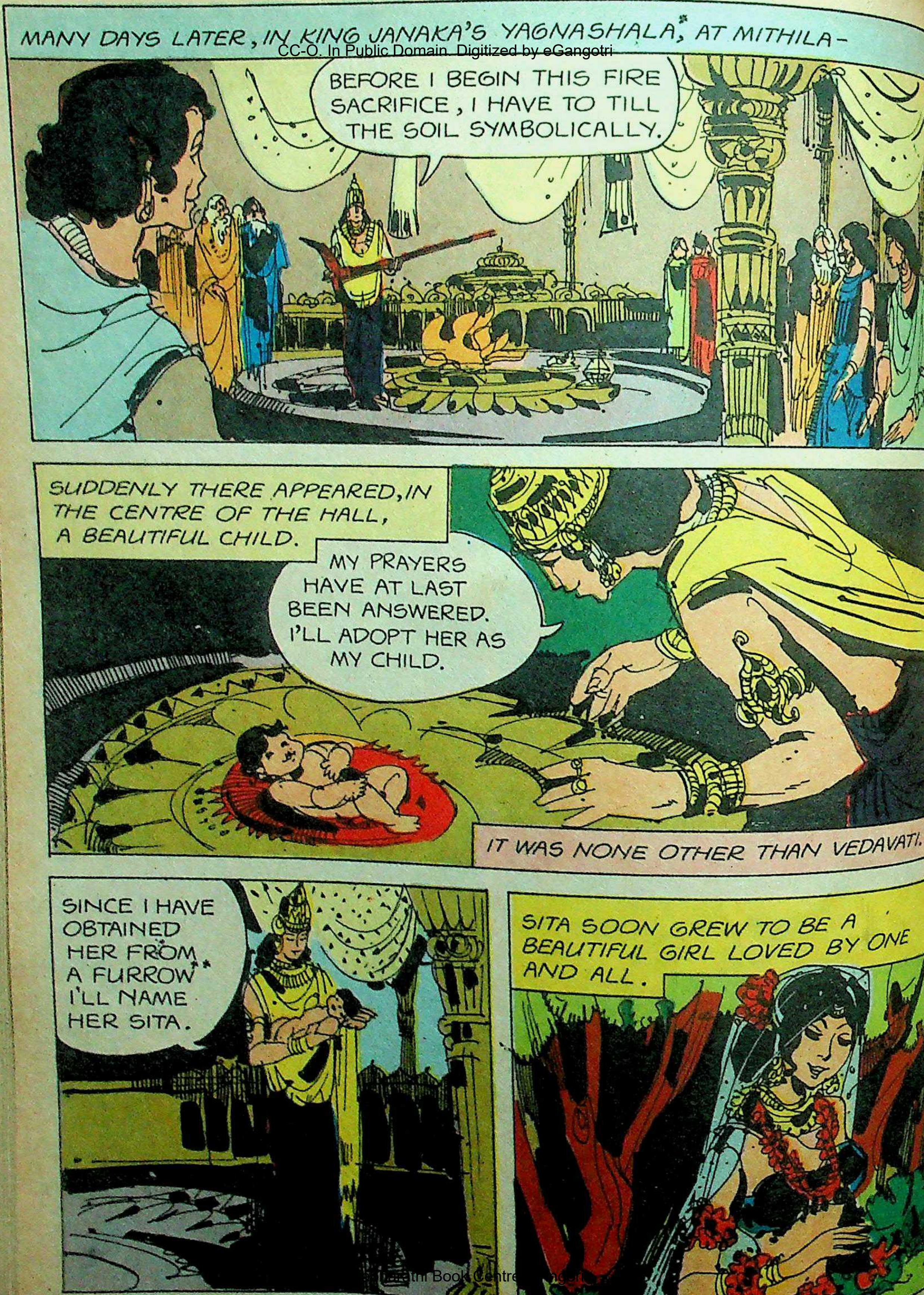
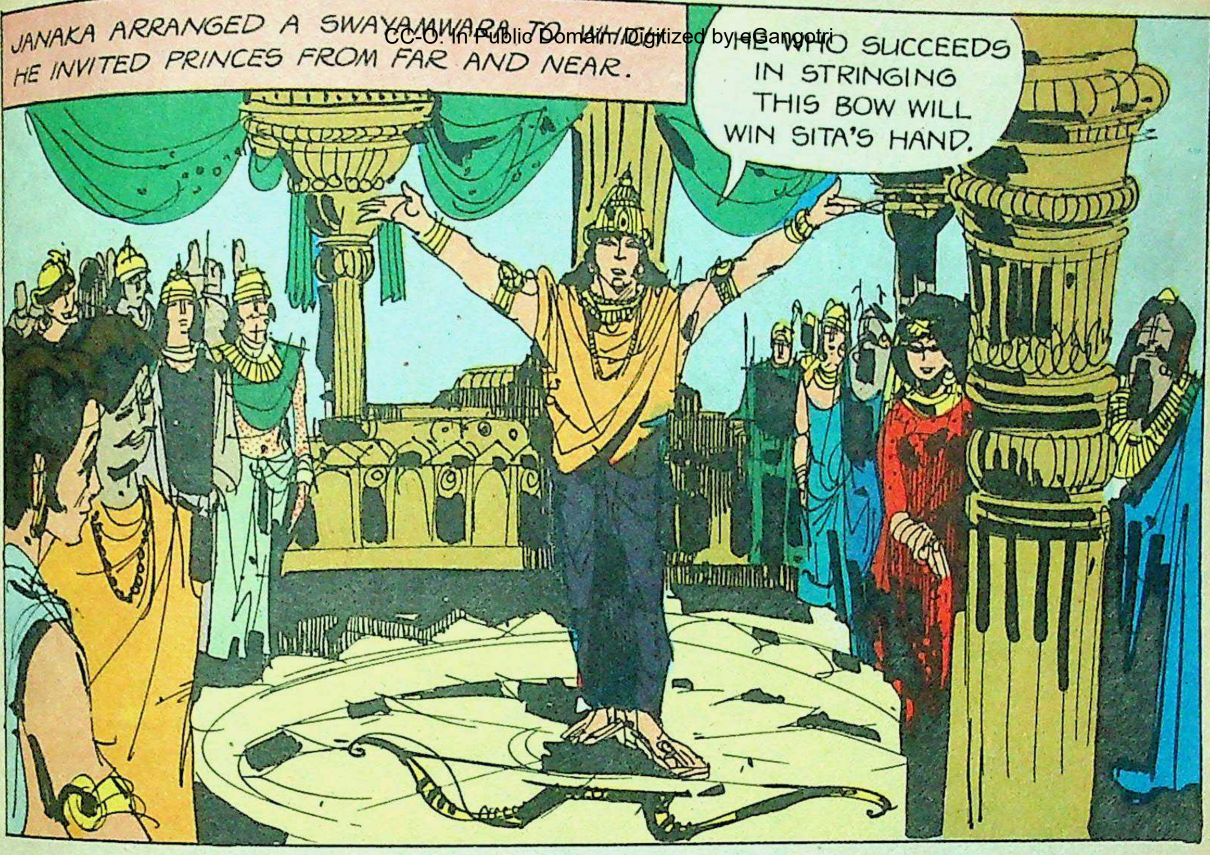
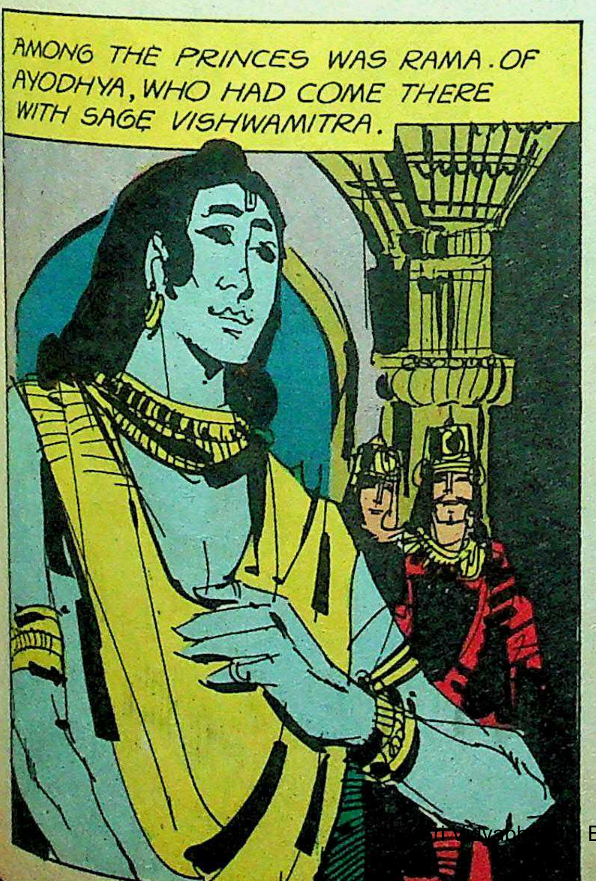

I AM RAVANA, LORD OF LANKA. MARRY ME.
NONE OTHER THAN VISHNU CAN BE MY HUSBAND. GO AWAY.
RAVANA SEIZED HER BY HER HAIR.
ENRAGED, VEDAVATI CREATED A FIRE...
...AND JUMPED INTO IT.
I WILL BE BORN AGAIN AND BE THE CAUSE OF YOUR DEATH.

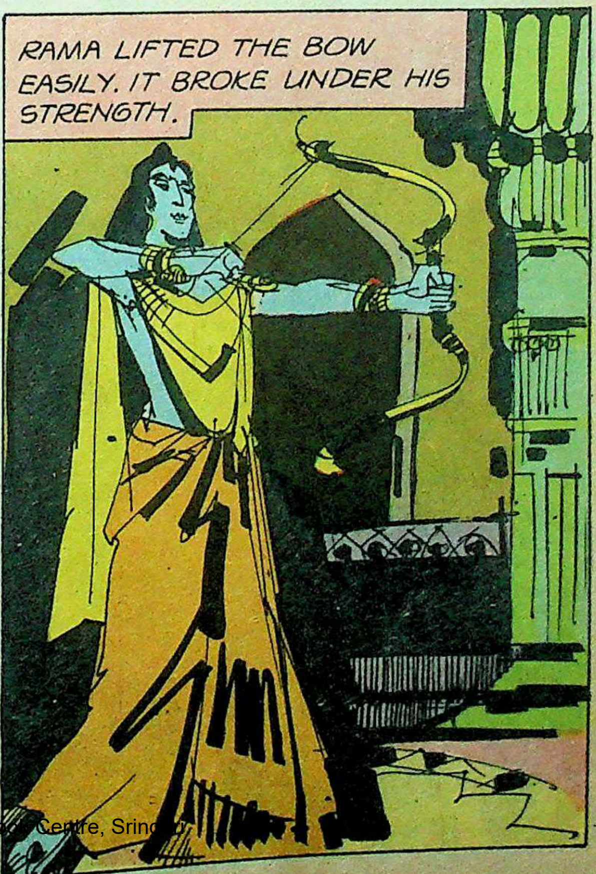

VEDAVATI TOOK BIRTH IN A LOTUS.
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL BABY! WHO COULD SHE BE?
RAVANA TOOK HER TO HIS CAMP. BUT–
SHE WILL BE THE CAUSE OF YOUR DEATH.
WHAT SHALL I DO WITH HER?
DISCARD HER.
RAVANA IMMEDIATELY THREW HER INTO THE RIVER.


MANY DAYS LATER, IN KING JANAKA'S YAGNASHALA,* AT MITHILA-
BEFORE I BEGIN THIS FIRE SACRIFICE, I HAVE TO TILL THE SOIL SYMBOLICALLY.
SUDDENLY THERE APPEARED, IN THE CENTRE OF THE HALL, A BEAUTIFUL CHILD.
MY PRAYERS HAVE AT LAST BEEN ANSWERED. I'LL ADOPT HER AS MY CHILD.
IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN VEDAVATI.
SINCE I HAVE OBTAINED HER FROM A FURROW** I'LL NAME HER SITA.
SITA SOON GREW TO BE A BEAUTIFUL GIRL LOVED BY ONE AND ALL.

* HALL OF FIRE-SACRIFICE. ** SITA.


JANAKA ARRANGED A SWAYAMWARA TO WHICH HE INVITED PRINCES FROM FAR AND NEAR.
HE WHO SUCCEEDS IN STRINGING THIS BOW WILL WIN SITA'S HAND.


AMONG THE PRINCES WAS RAMA OF AYODHYA, WHO HAD COME THERE WITH SAGE VISHWAMITRA.


RAMA LIFTED THE BOW EASILY. IT BROKE UNDER HIS STRENGTH.

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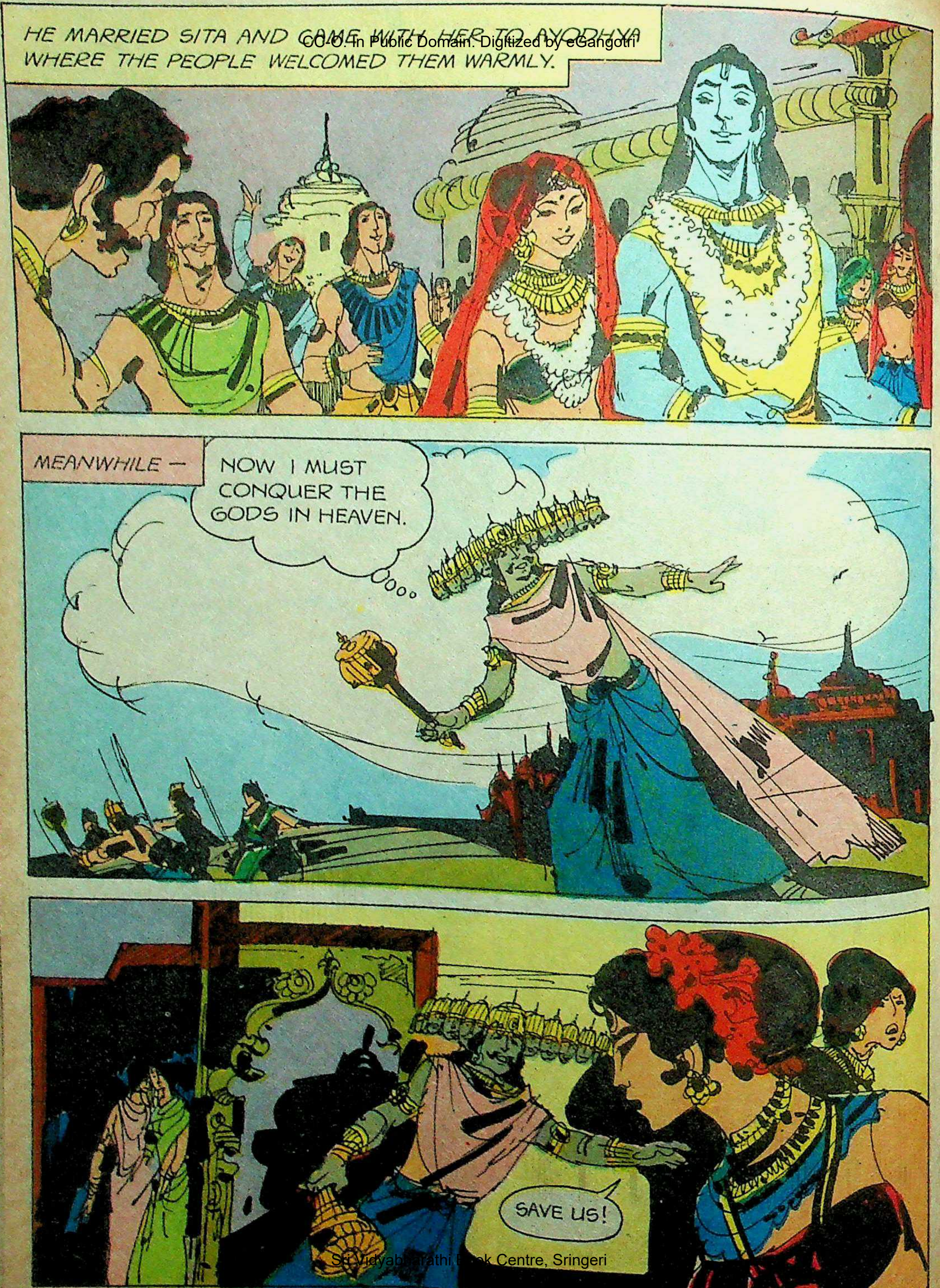
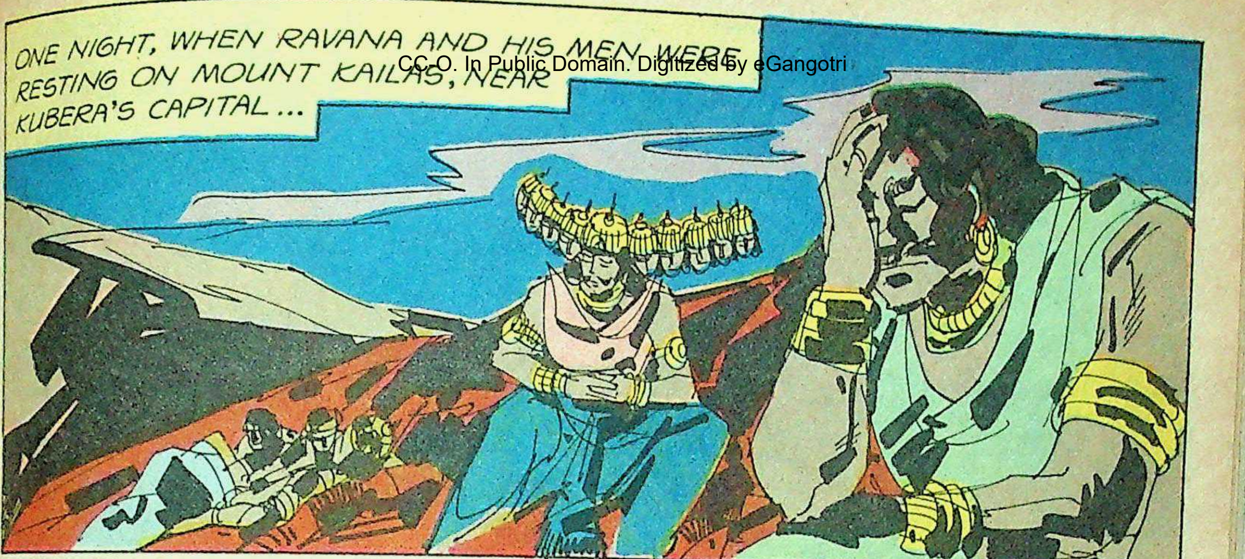
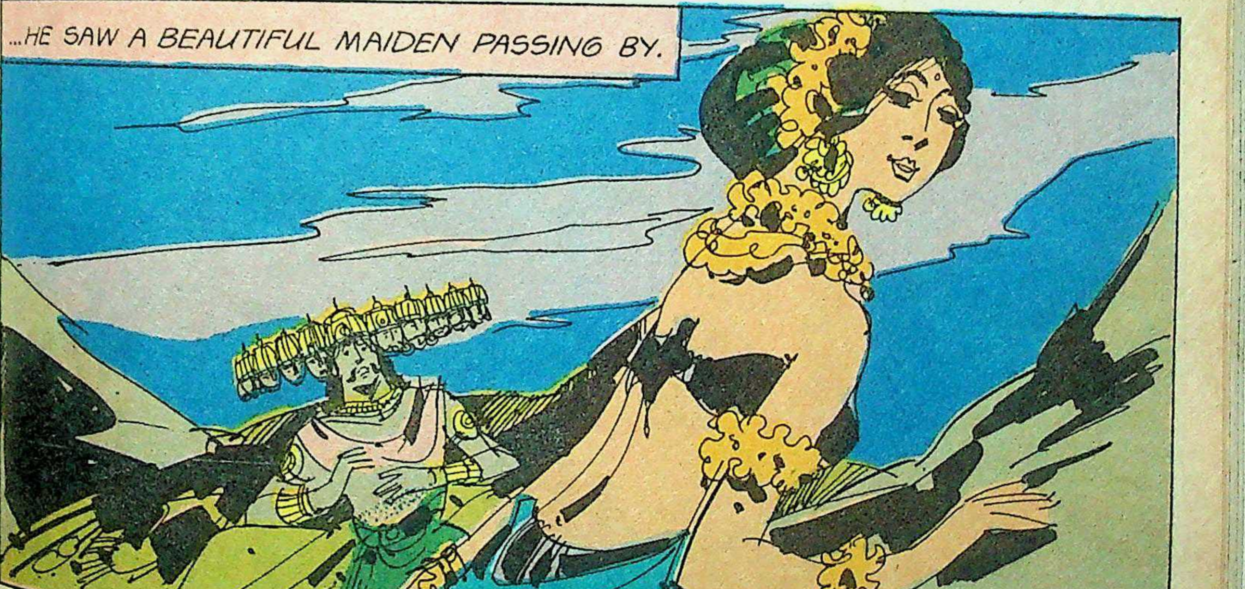
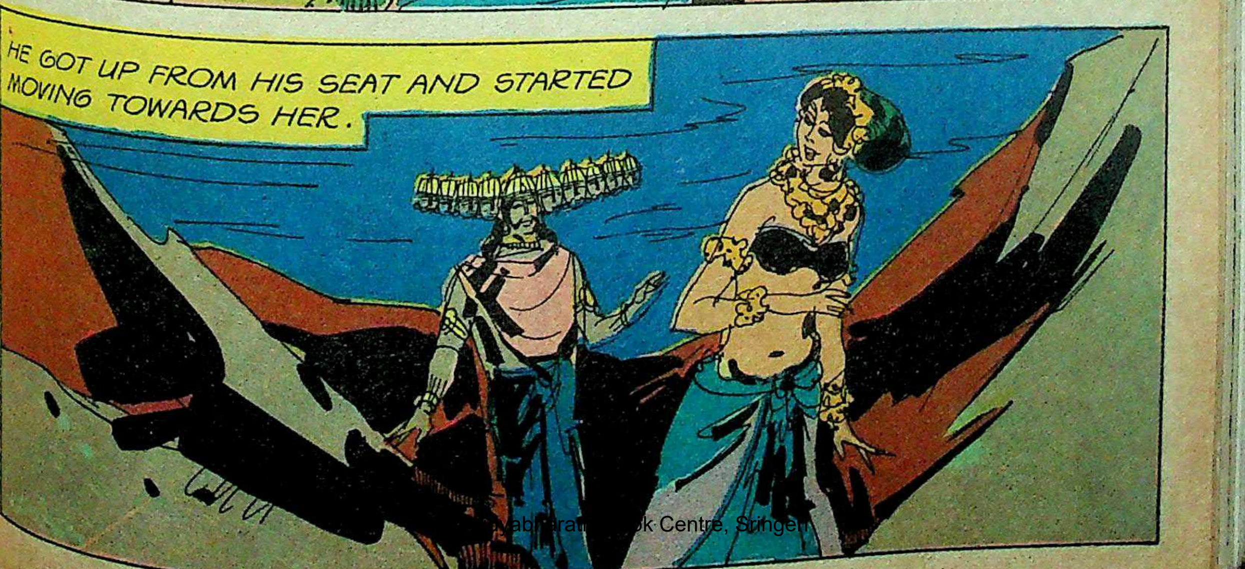

HE MARRIED SITA AND CAME WITH HER TO AYODHYA WHERE THE PEOPLE WELCOMED THEM WARMLY.
MEANWHILE —
NOW I MUST CONQUER THE GODS IN HEAVEN.
SAVE US!


ONE NIGHT, WHEN RAVANA AND HIS MEN WERE RESTING ON MOUNT KAILAS, NEAR KUBERA'S CAPITAL ...


...HE SAW A BEAUTIFUL MAIDEN PASSING BY.


HE GOT UP FROM HIS SEAT AND STARTED MOVING TOWARDS HER.

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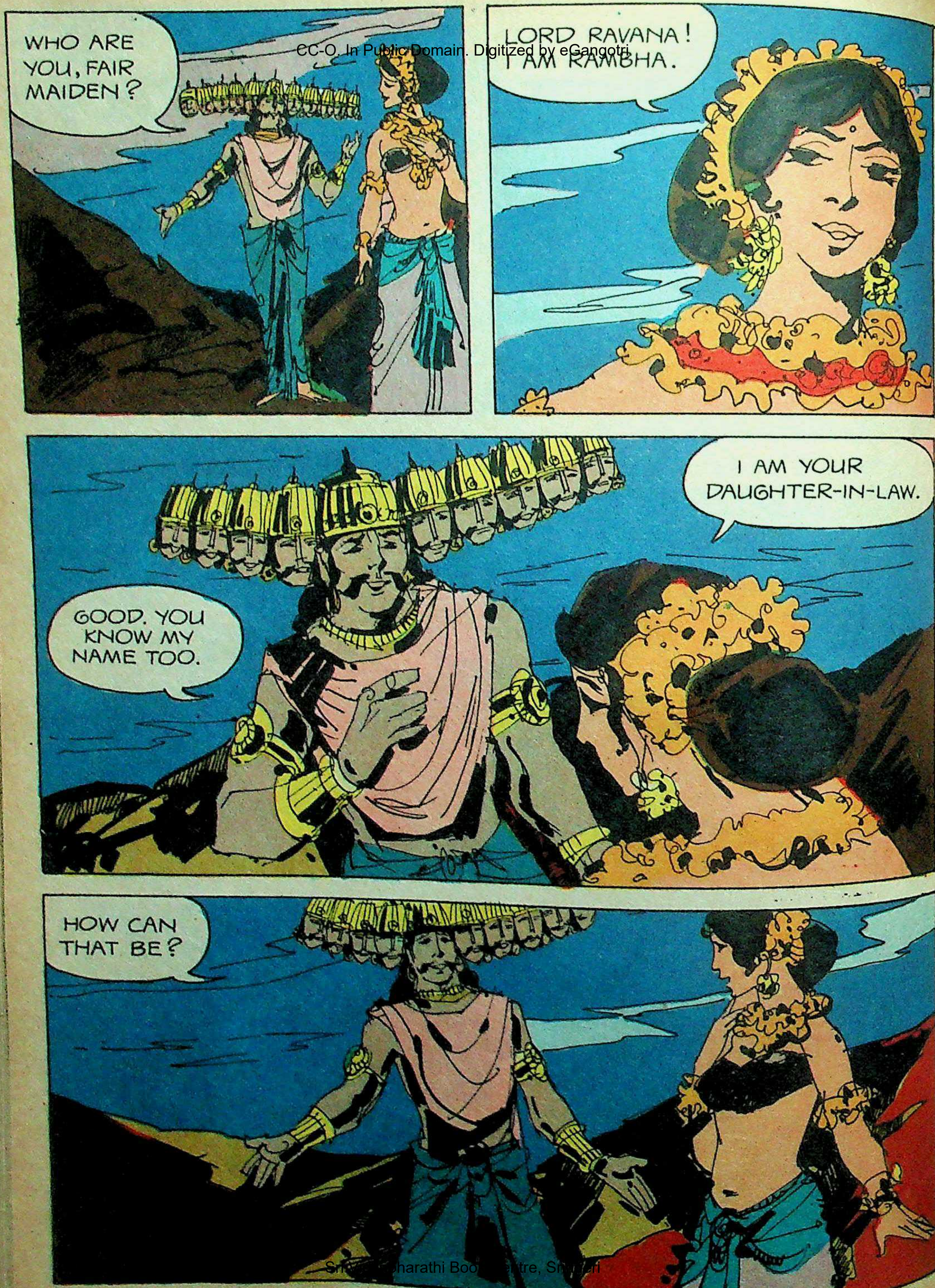
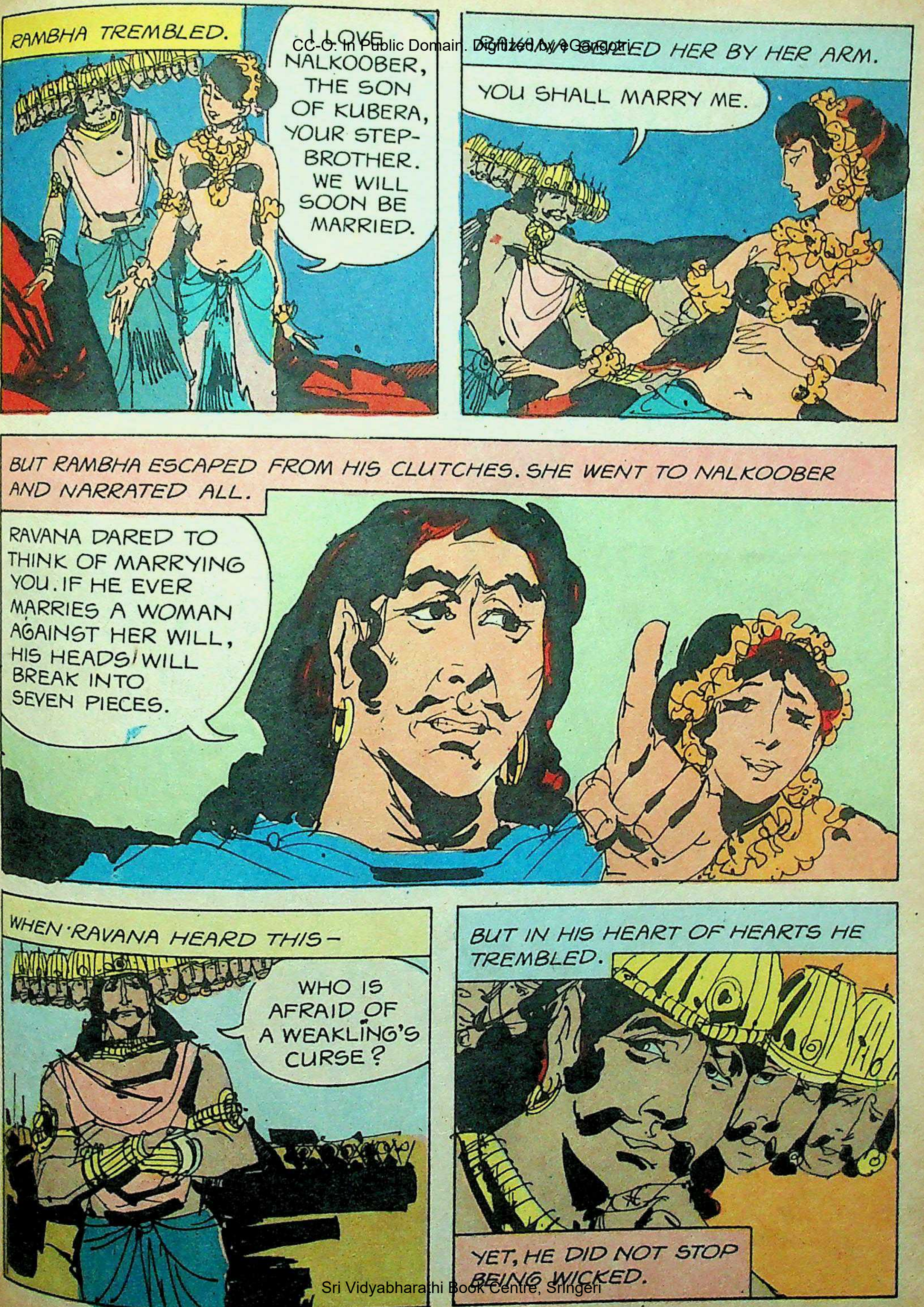
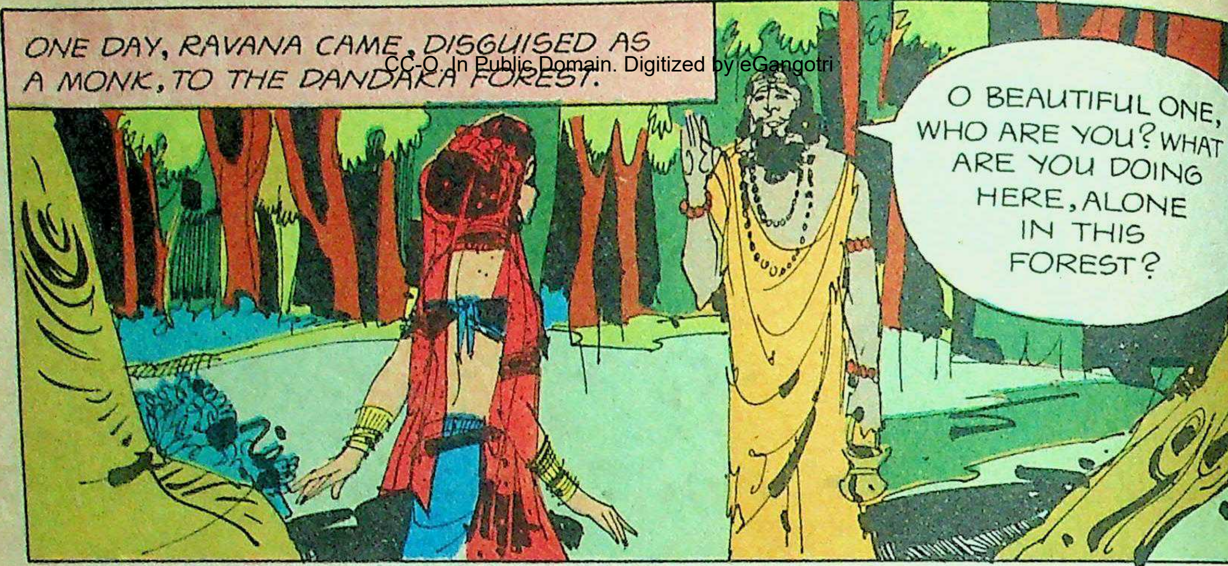
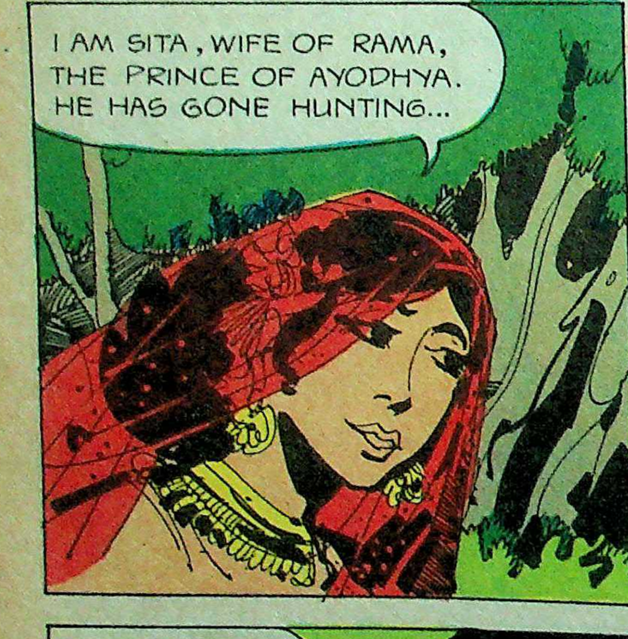
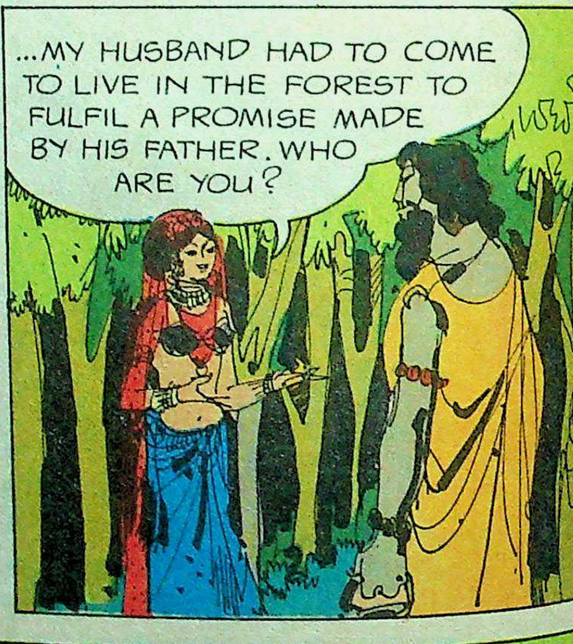
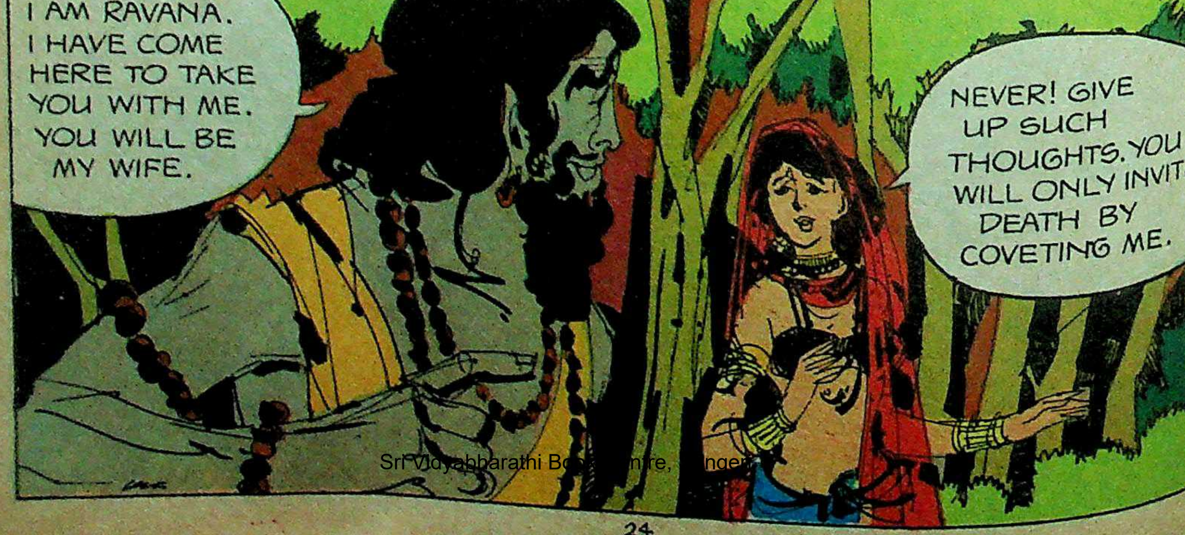

WHO ARE YOU, FAIR MAIDEN?
LORD RAVANA! I AM RAMBHA.
I AM YOUR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.
GOOD. YOU KNOW MY NAME TOO.
HOW CAN THAT BE?


RAMBHA TREMBLED.
I LOVE NALKOOBER, THE SON OF KUBERA, YOUR STEP-BROTHER. WE WILL SOON BE MARRIED.
RAVANA SEIZED HER BY HER ARM.
YOU SHALL MARRY ME.
BUT RAMBHA ESCAPED FROM HIS CLUTCHES. SHE WENT TO NALKOOBER AND NARRATED ALL.
RAVANA DARED TO THINK OF MARRYING YOU. IF HE EVER MARRIES A WOMAN AGAINST HER WILL, HIS HEADS WILL BREAK INTO SEVEN PIECES.
WHEN RAVANA HEARD THIS—
WHO IS AFRAID OF A WEAKLING'S CURSE?
BUT IN HIS HEART OF HEARTS HE TREMBLED.
YET, HE DID NOT STOP BEING WICKED.

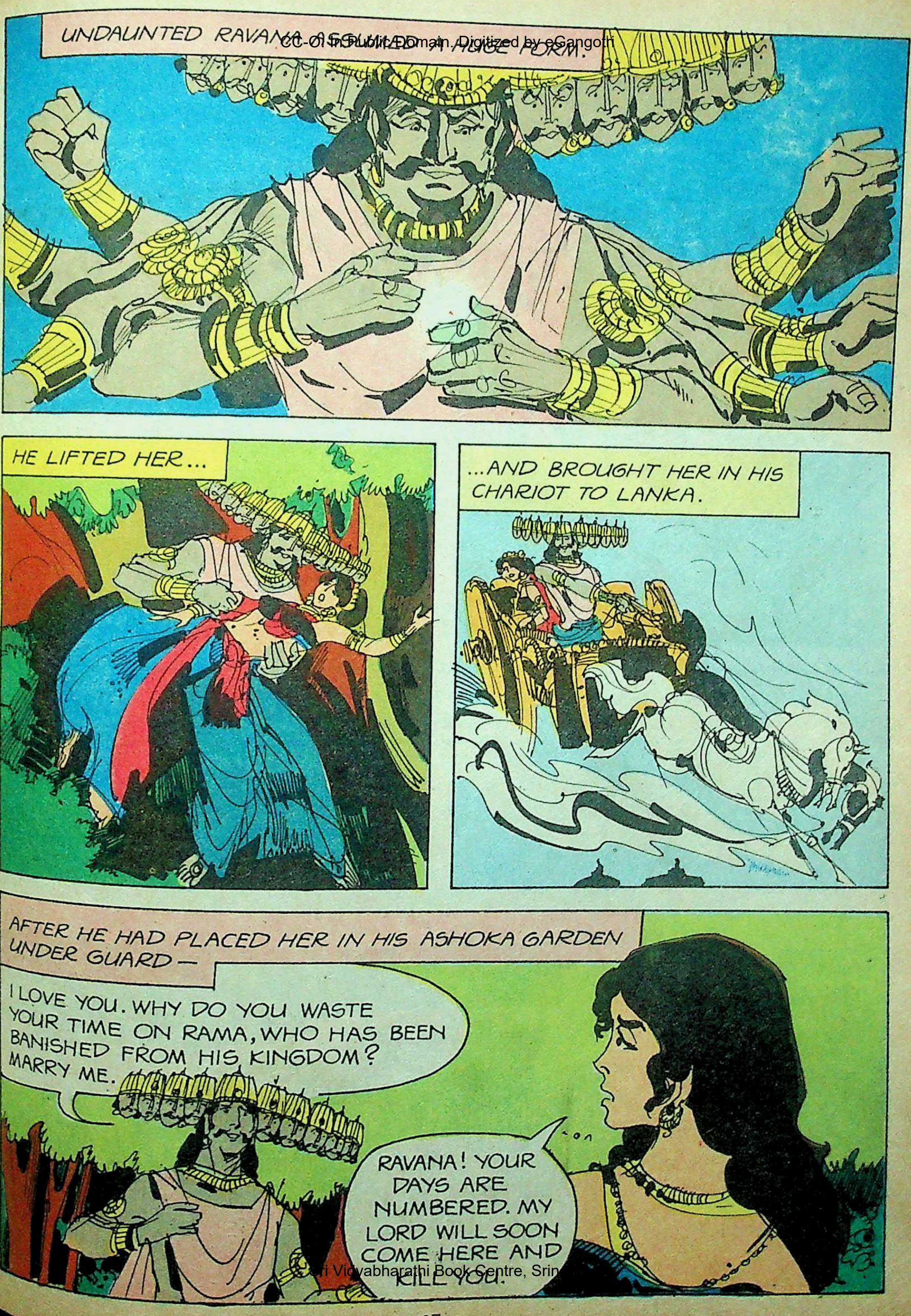

ONE DAY, RAVANA CAME, DISGUISED AS A MONK, TO THE DANDAKA FOREST.
O BEAUTIFUL ONE, WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, ALONE IN THIS FOREST?

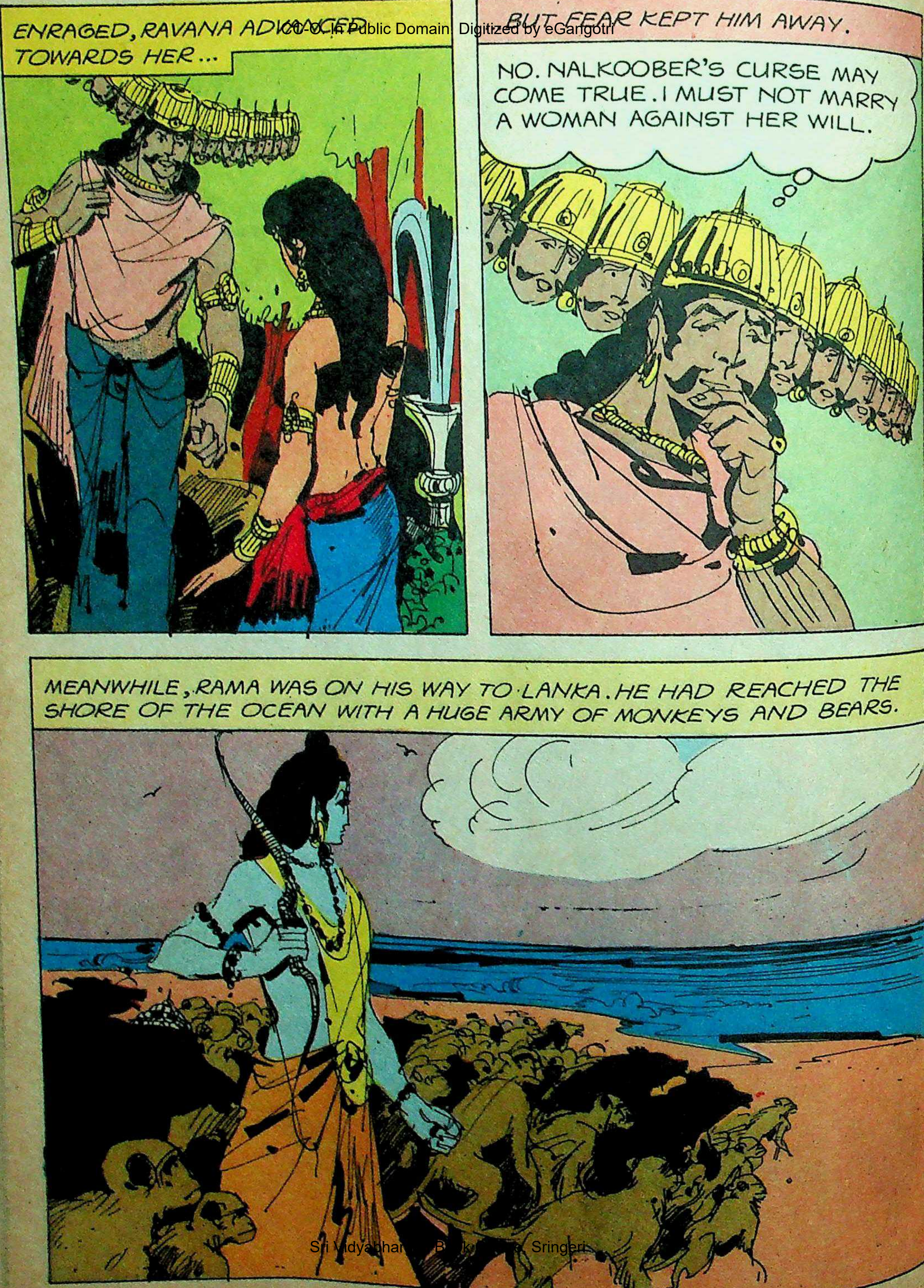

I AM SITA, WIFE OF RAMA, THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA. HE HAS GONE HUNTING...


...MY HUSBAND HAD TO COME TO LIVE IN THE FOREST TO FULFIL A PROMISE MADE BY HIS FATHER. WHO ARE YOU?

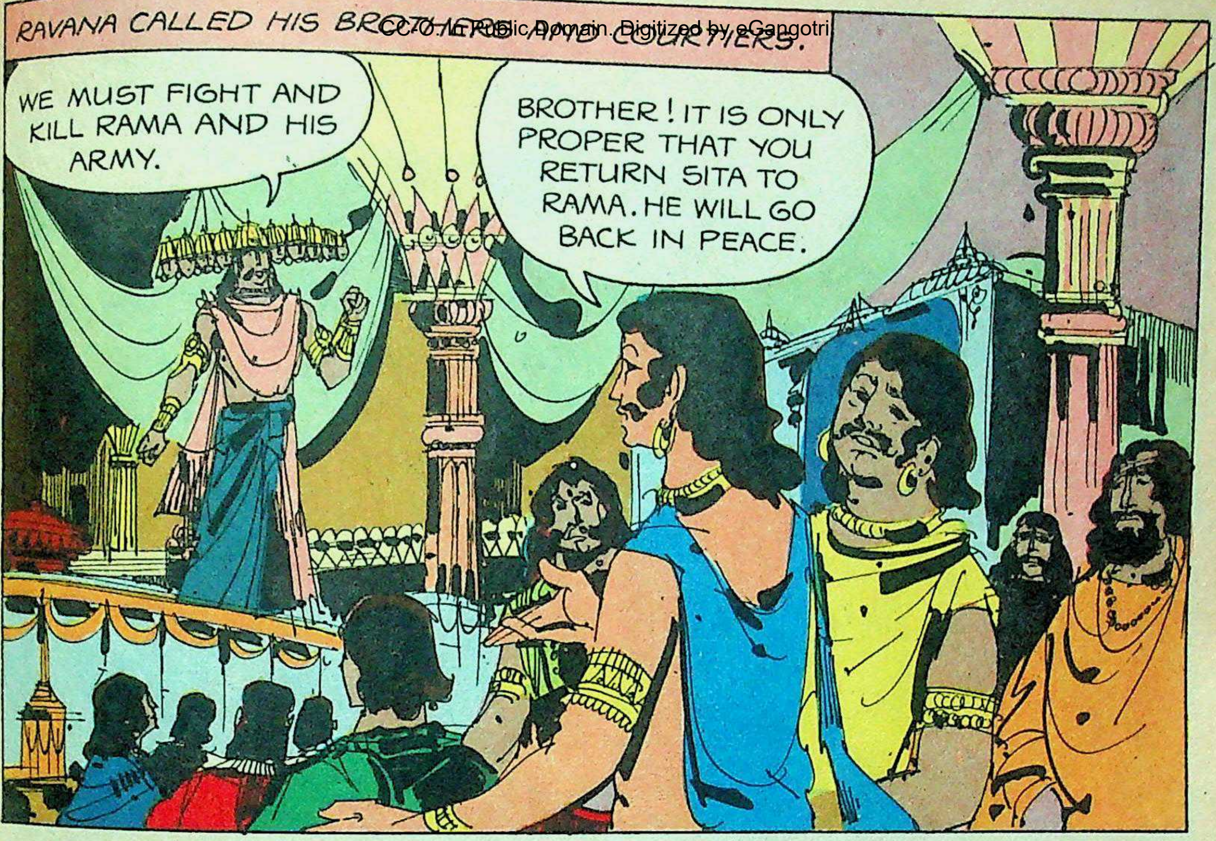

I AM RAVANA. I HAVE COME HERE TO TAKE YOU WITH ME. YOU WILL BE MY WIFE.
NEVER! GIVE UP SUCH THOUGHTS. YOU WILL ONLY INVITE DEATH BY COVETING ME.

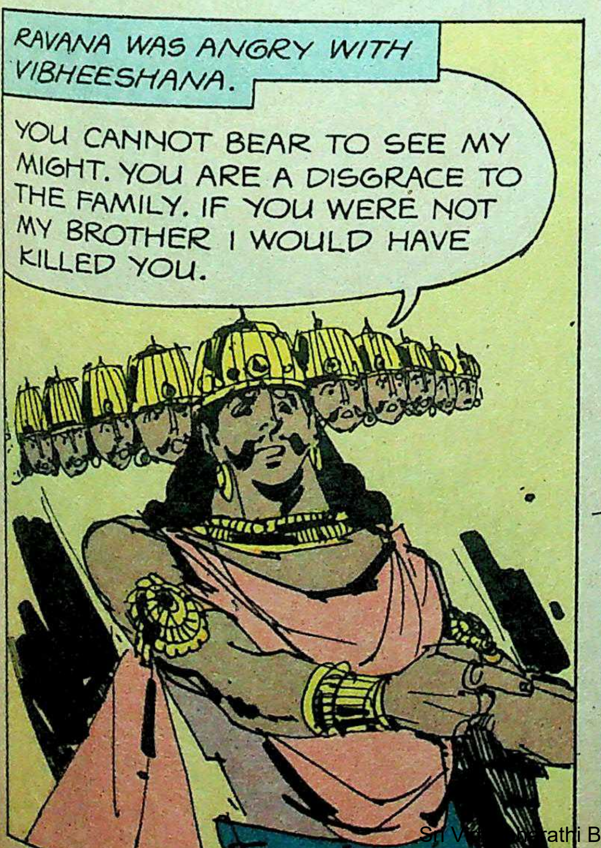
Sri Vidyabharathi Bo... ...ntre, ...ngeri

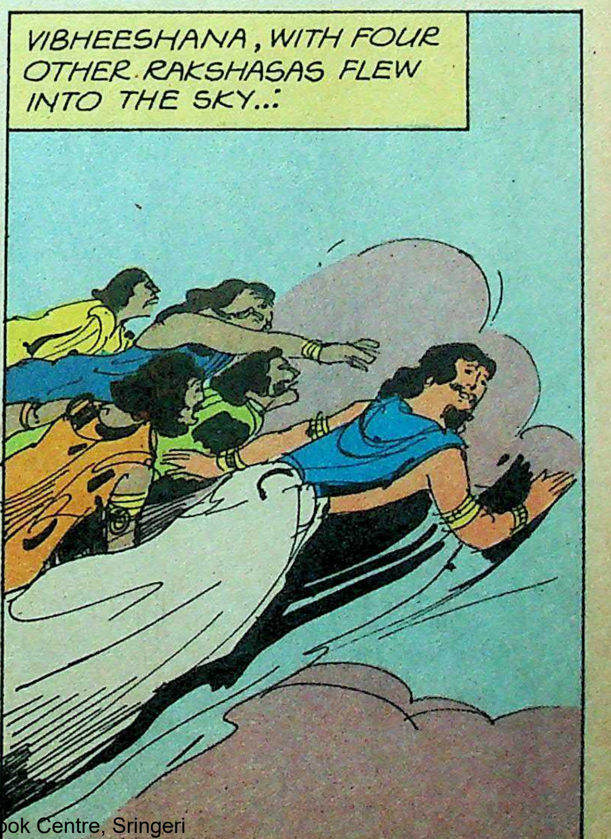

UNDAUNTED RAVANA ASSUMED A HUGE FORM.
HE LIFTED HER...
...AND BROUGHT HER IN HIS CHARIOT TO LANKA.
AFTER HE HAD PLACED HER IN HIS ASHOKA GARDEN UNDER GUARD –
I LOVE YOU. WHY DO YOU WASTE YOUR TIME ON RAMA, WHO HAS BEEN BANISHED FROM HIS KINGDOM? MARRY ME.
RAVANA! YOUR DAYS ARE NUMBERED. MY LORD WILL SOON COME HERE AND KILL YOU.

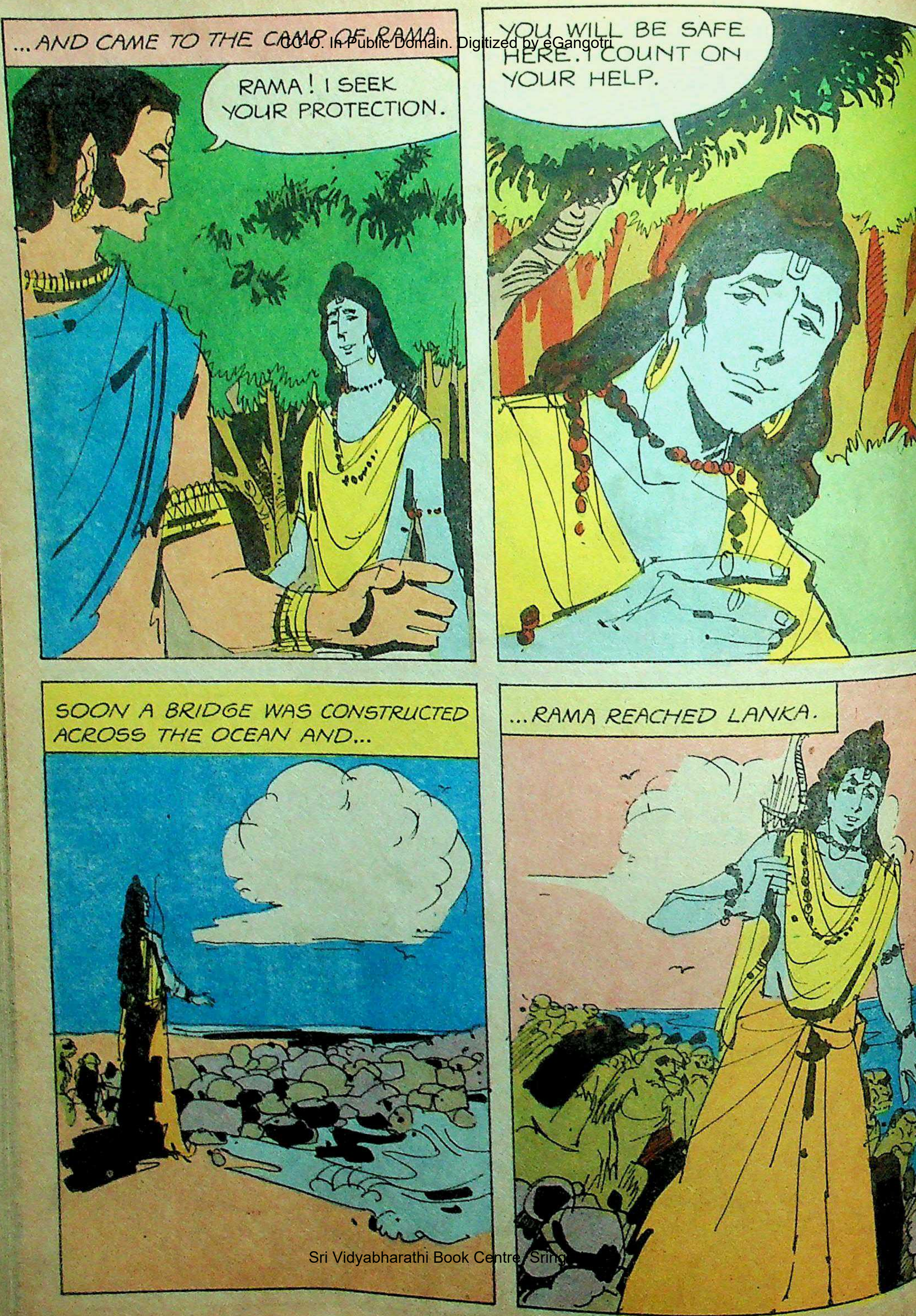

ENRAGED, RAVANA ADVANCED TOWARDS HER...
BUT FEAR KEPT HIM AWAY.
NO. NALKOOBER'S CURSE MAY COME TRUE. I MUST NOT MARRY A WOMAN AGAINST HER WILL.
MEANWHILE, RAMA WAS ON HIS WAY TO LANKA. HE HAD REACHED THE SHORE OF THE OCEAN WITH A HUGE ARMY OF MONKEYS AND BEARS.

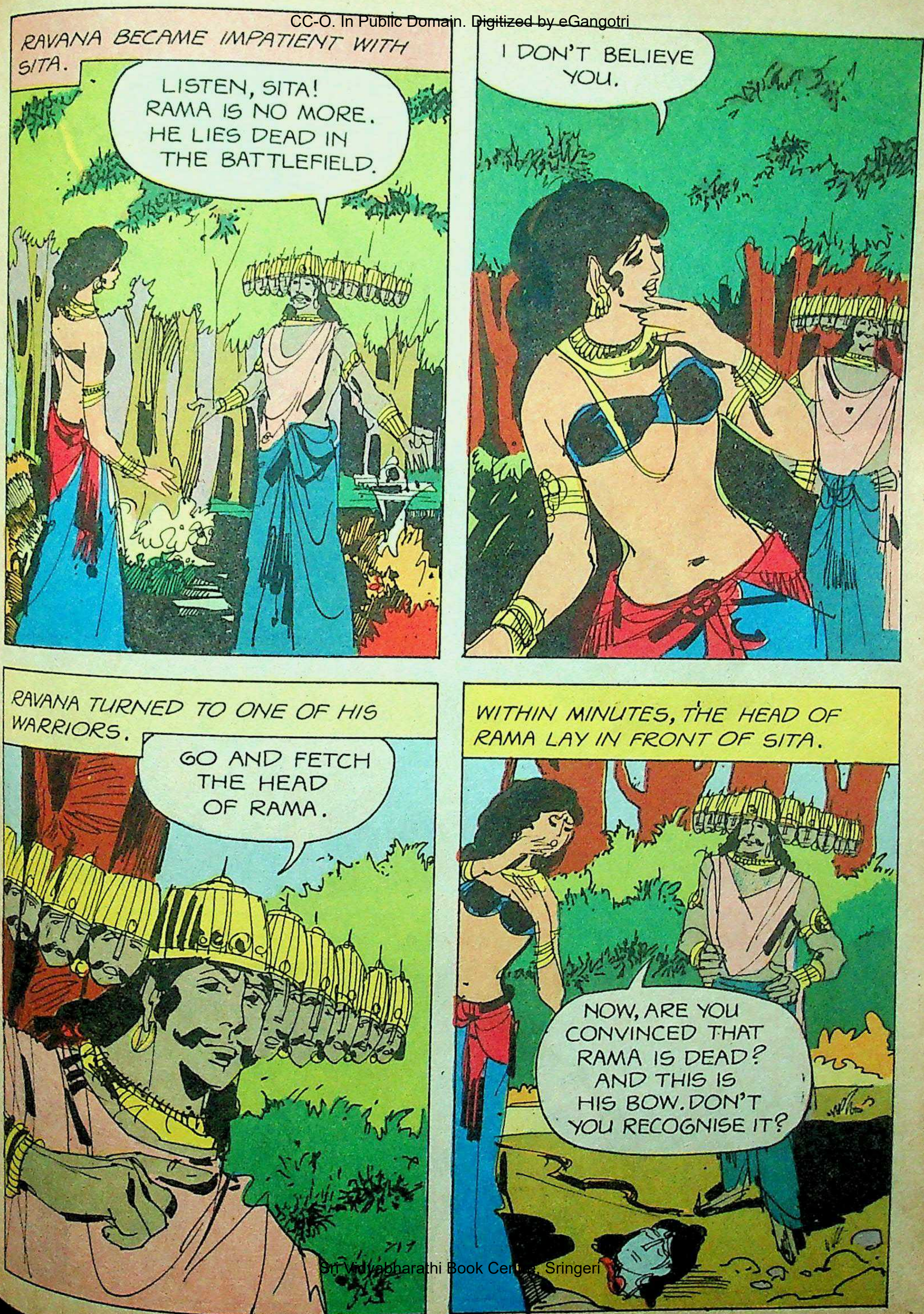
Sri Vidyabhar[illegible] B[illegible]k[illegible] Sringeri

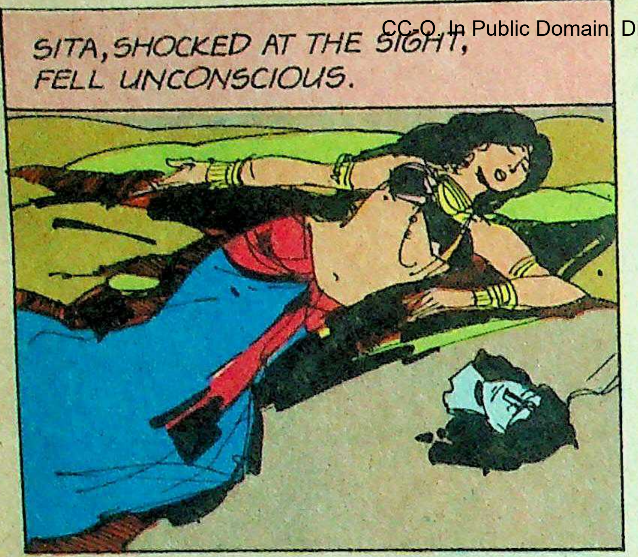

RAVANA CALLED HIS BROTHERS AND COURTIERS.
WE MUST FIGHT AND KILL RAMA AND HIS ARMY.
BROTHER! IT IS ONLY PROPER THAT YOU RETURN SITA TO RAMA. HE WILL GO BACK IN PEACE.

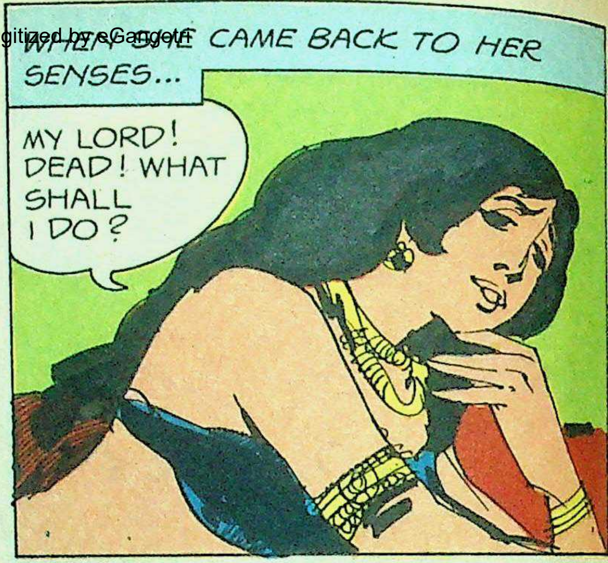

RAVANA WAS ANGRY WITH VIBHEESHANA.
YOU CANNOT BEAR TO SEE MY MIGHT. YOU ARE A DISGRACE TO THE FAMILY. IF YOU WERE NOT MY BROTHER I WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU.

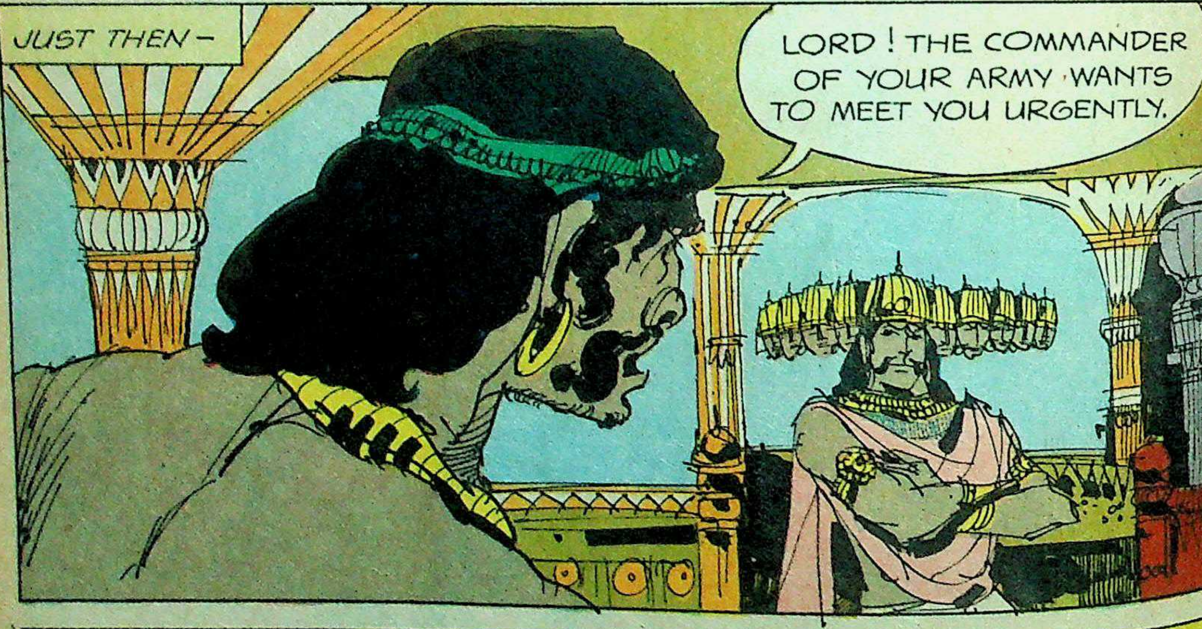

VIBHEESHANA, WITH FOUR OTHER RAKSHASAS FLEW INTO THE SKY...

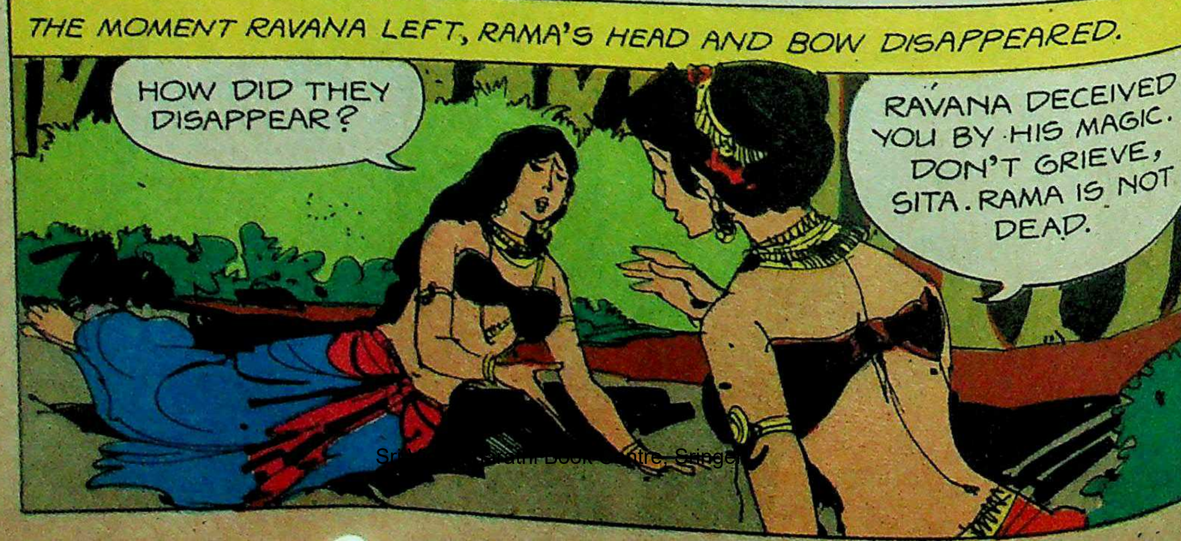

...AND CAME TO THE CAMP OF RAMA
RAMA! I SEEK YOUR PROTECTION.
YOU WILL BE SAFE HERE. I COUNT ON YOUR HELP.
SOON A BRIDGE WAS CONSTRUCTED ACROSS THE OCEAN AND...
...RAMA REACHED LANKA.

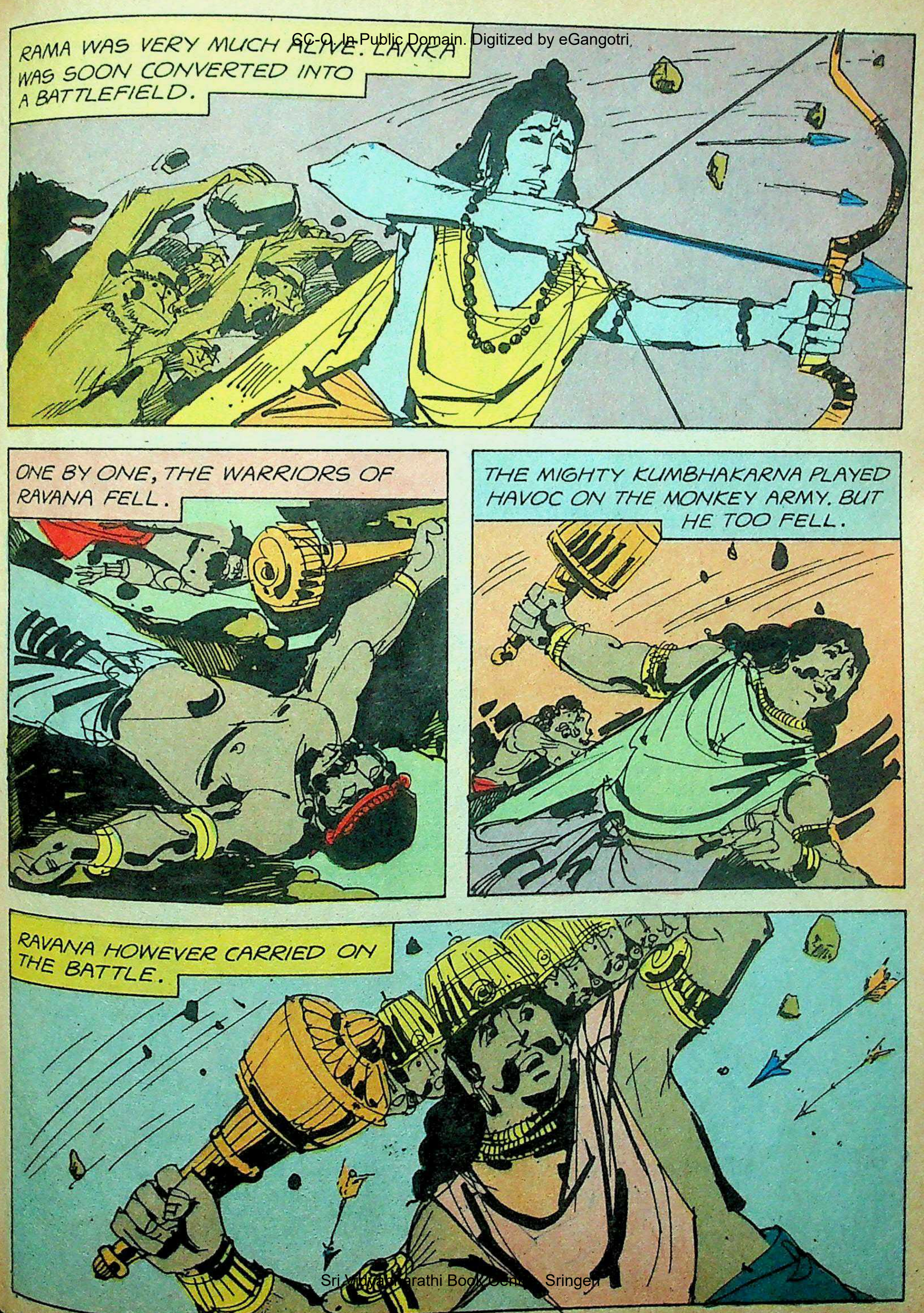

RAVANA BECAME IMPATIENT WITH SITA.
LISTEN, SITA! RAMA IS NO MORE. HE LIES DEAD IN THE BATTLEFIELD.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
RAVANA TURNED TO ONE OF HIS WARRIORS.
GO AND FETCH THE HEAD OF RAMA.
WITHIN MINUTES, THE HEAD OF RAMA LAY IN FRONT OF SITA.
NOW, ARE YOU CONVINCED THAT RAMA IS DEAD? AND THIS IS HIS BOW. DON'T YOU RECOGNISE IT?

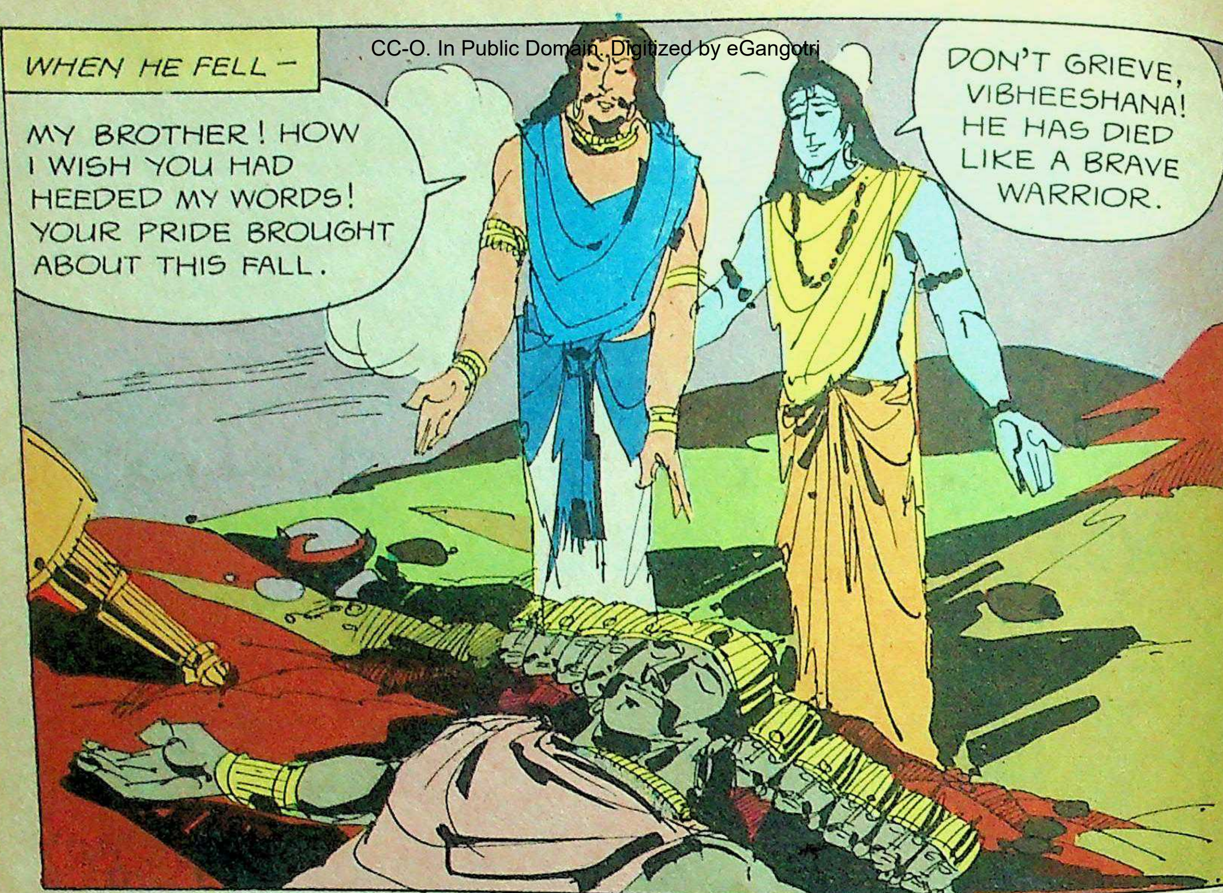

SITA, SHOCKED AT THE SIGHT, FELL UNCONSCIOUS.

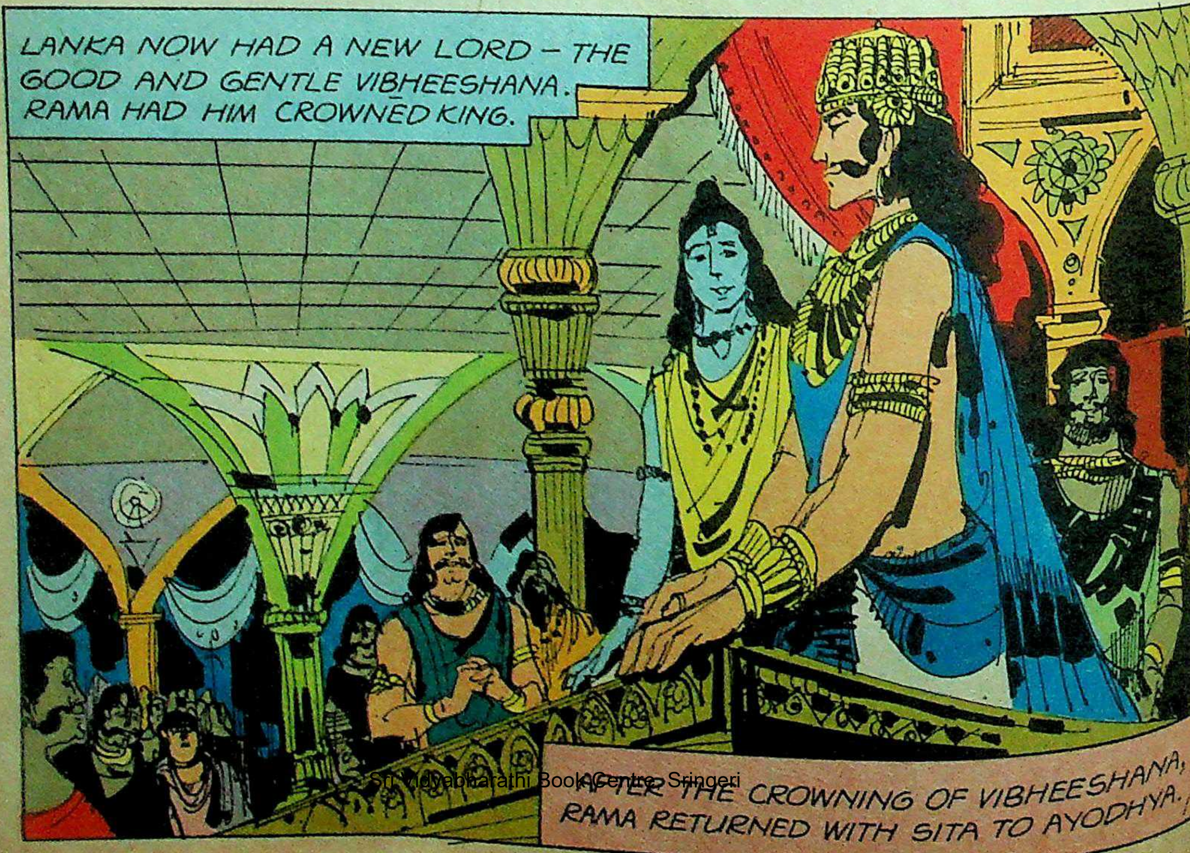

WHEN SHE CAME BACK TO HER SENSES...
MY LORD! DEAD! WHAT SHALL I DO?


JUST THEN –
LORD! THE COMMANDER OF YOUR ARMY WANTS TO MEET YOU URGENTLY.


THE MOMENT RAVANA LEFT, RAMA'S HEAD AND BOW DISAPPEARED.
HOW DID THEY DISAPPEAR?
RAVANA DECEIVED YOU BY HIS MAGIC. DON'T GRIEVE, SITA. RAMA IS NOT DEAD.


RAMA WAS VERY MUCH ALIVE. LANKA WAS SOON CONVERTED INTO A BATTLEFIELD.
ONE BY ONE, THE WARRIORS OF RAVANA FELL.
THE MIGHTY KUMBHAKARNA PLAYED HAVOC ON THE MONKEY ARMY. BUT HE TOO FELL.
RAVANA HOWEVER CARRIED ON THE BATTLE.


WHEN HE FELL –
MY BROTHER! HOW I WISH YOU HAD HEEDED MY WORDS! YOUR PRIDE BROUGHT ABOUT THIS FALL.
DON'T GRIEVE, VIBHEESHANA! HE HAS DIED LIKE A BRAVE WARRIOR.


LANKA NOW HAD A NEW LORD – THE GOOD AND GENTLE VIBHEESHANA. RAMA HAD HIM CROWNED KING.
AFTER THE CROWNING OF VIBHEESHANA, RAMA RETURNED WITH SITA TO AYODHYA.

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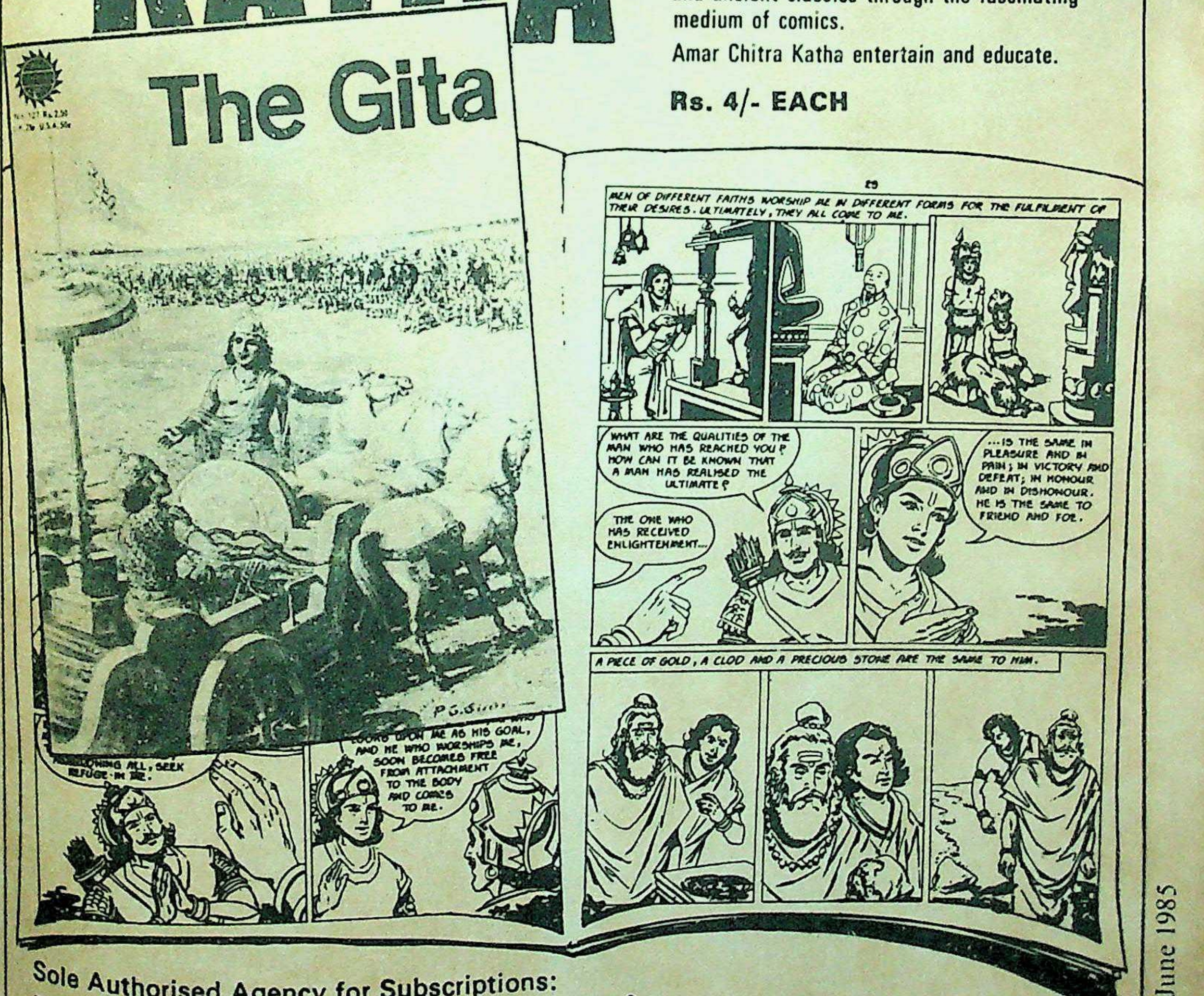
The Gita
MEN OF DIFFERENT FAITHS WORSHIP ME IN DIFFERENT FORMS FOR THE FULFILMENT OF THEIR DESIRES. ULTIMATELY, THEY ALL COME TO ME.
WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF THE MAN WHO HAS REACHED YOU? HOW CAN IT BE KNOWN THAT A MAN HAS REALISED THE ULTIMATE?
THE ONE WHO HAS RECEIVED ENLIGHTENMENT...
...IS THE SAME IN PLEASURE AND IN PAIN; IN VICTORY AND DEFEAT; IN HONOUR AND IN DISHONOUR. HE IS THE SAME TO FRIEND AND FOE.
A PIECE OF GOLD, A CLOD AND A PRECIOUS STONE ARE THE SAME TO HIM.
...ING ALL, SEEK REFUGE IN ME.
...LOOKS UPON ME AS HIS GOAL, AND HE WHO WORSHIPS ME, SOON BECOMES FREE FROM ATTACHMENT TO THE BODY AND COMES TO ME.

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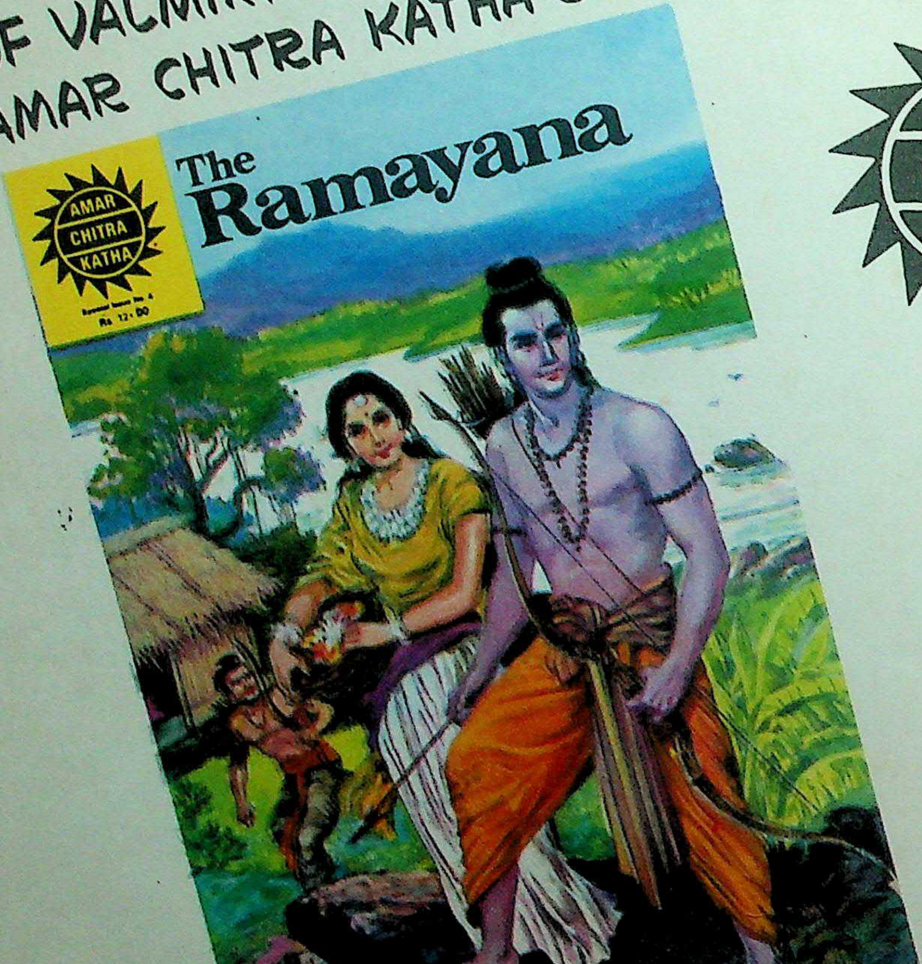
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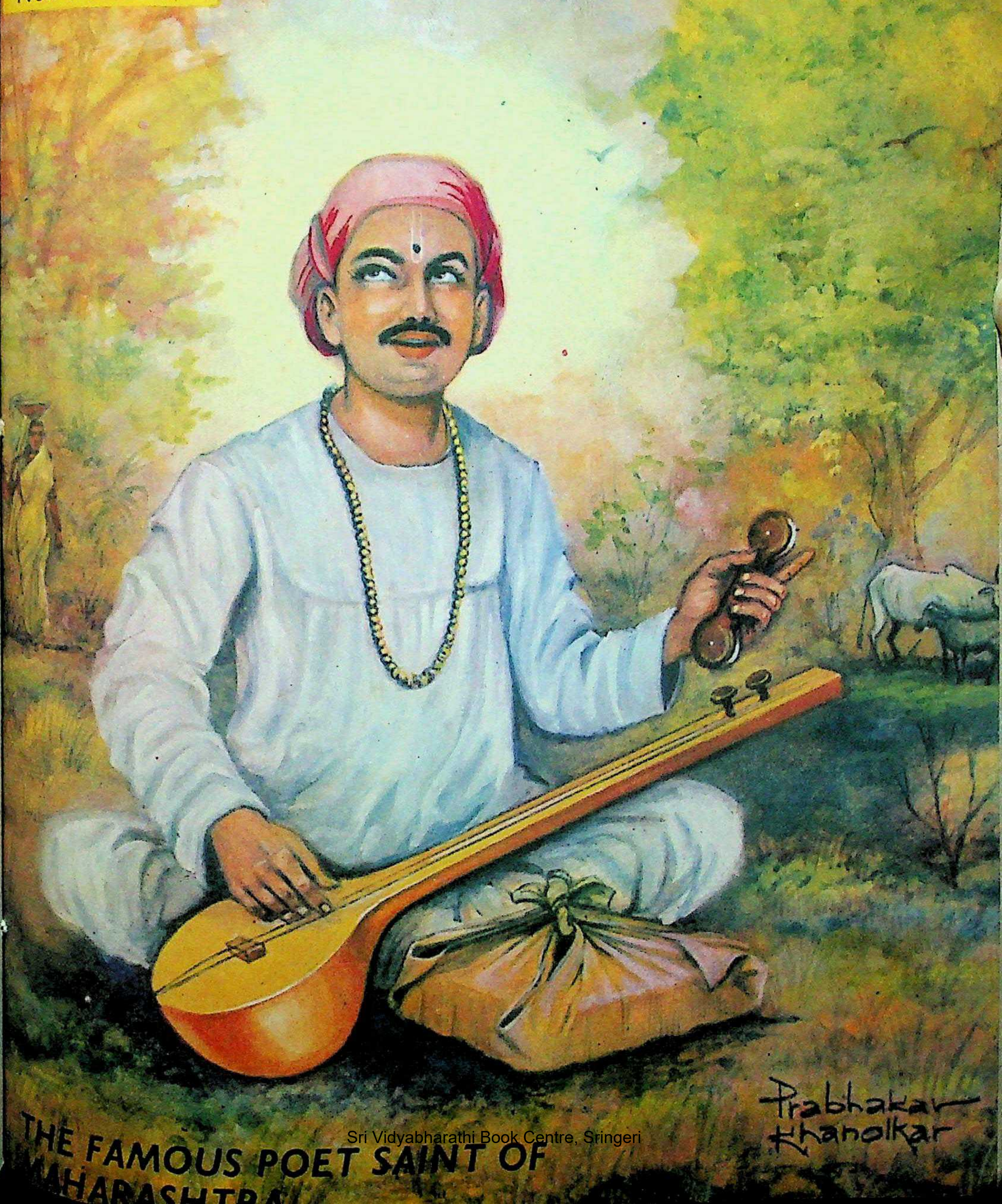
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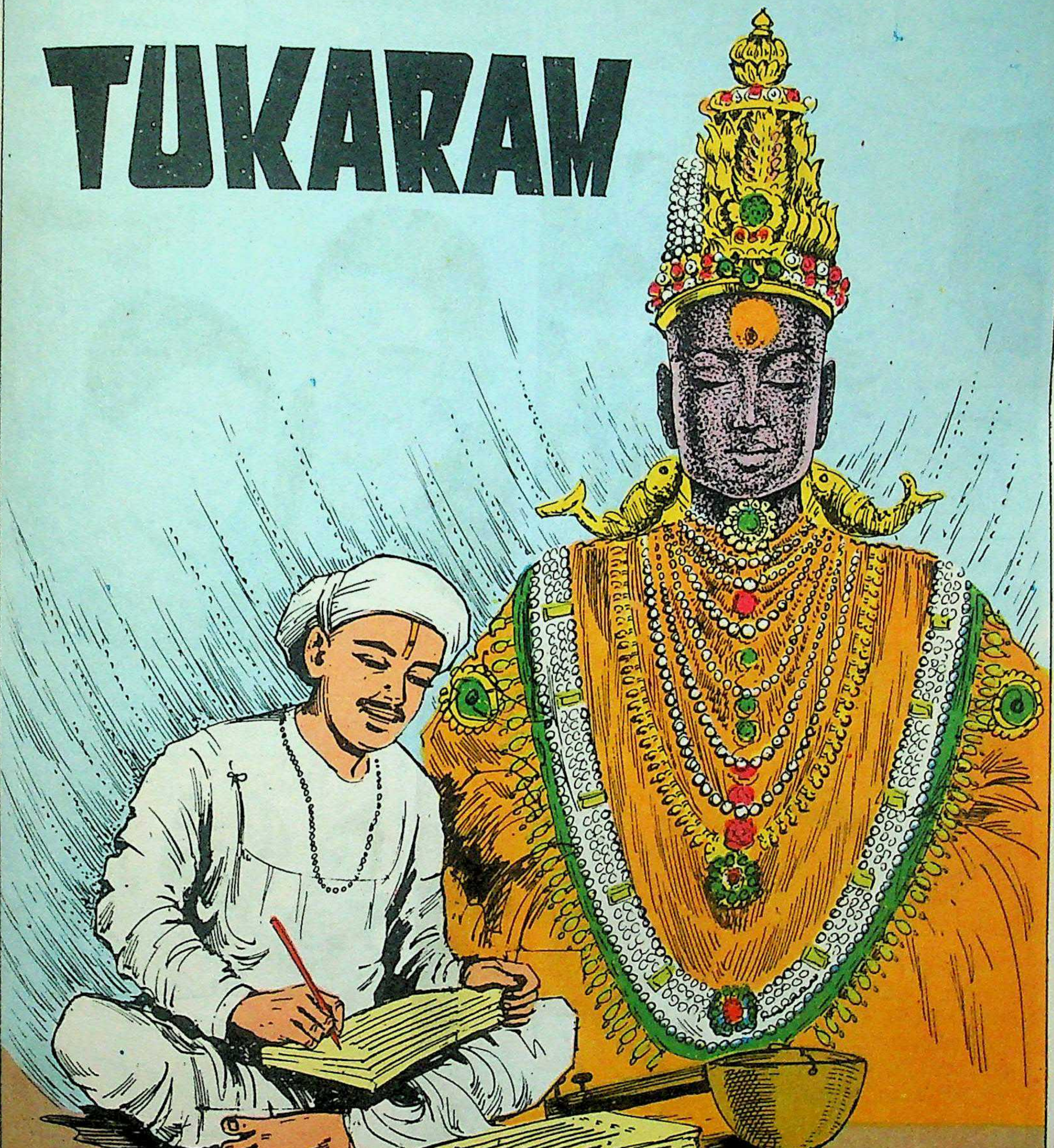
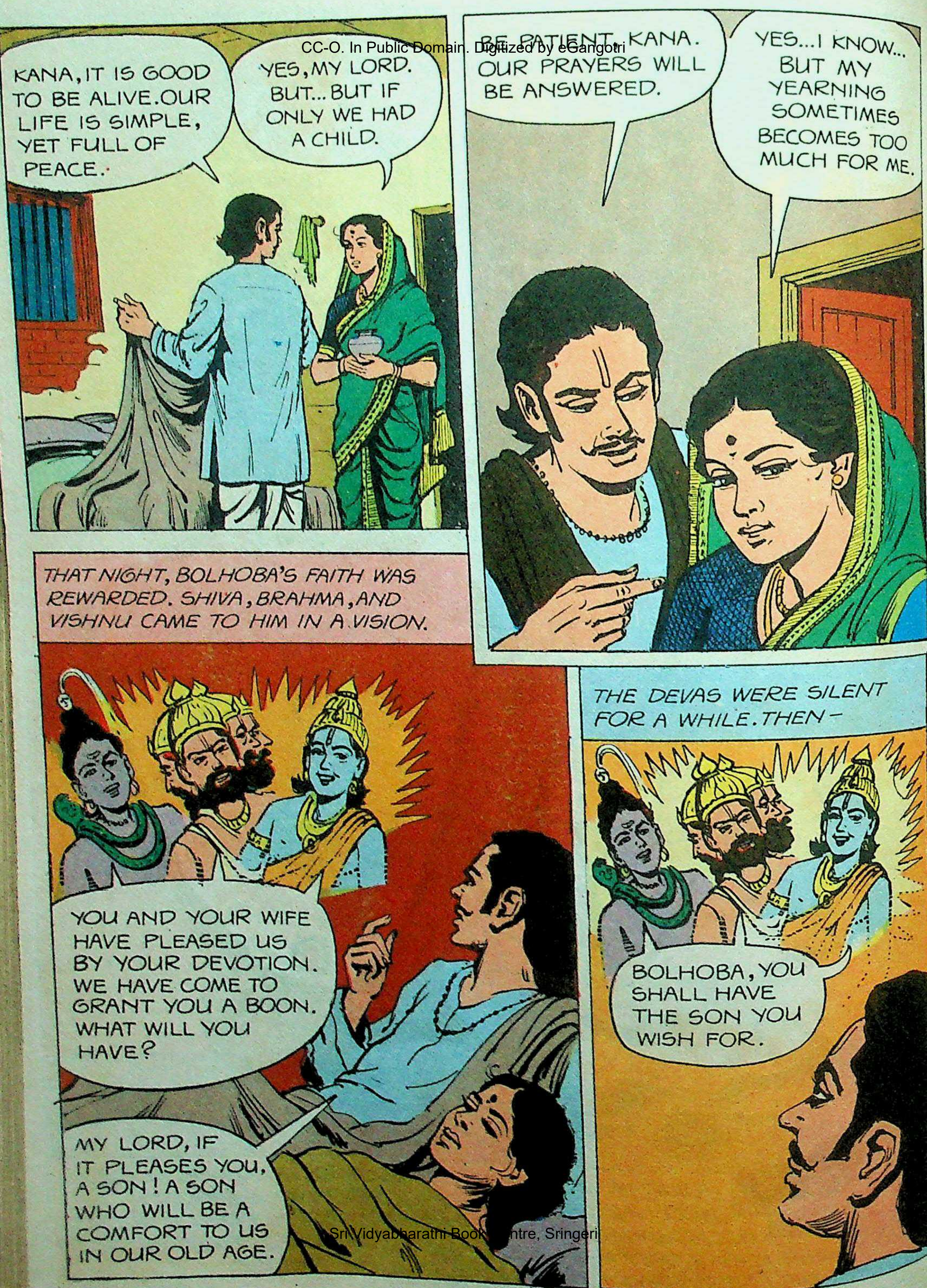
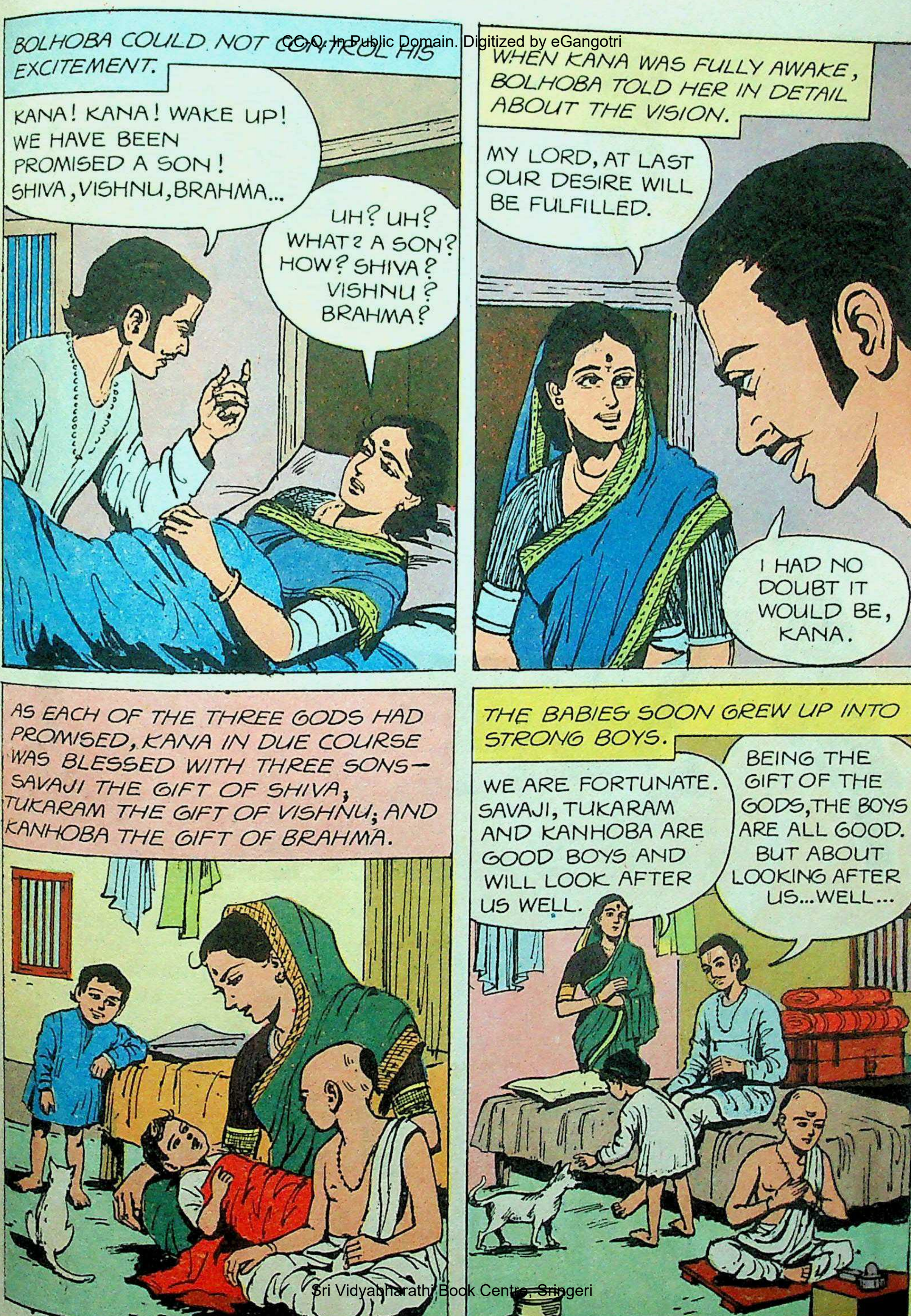
Editor: Anant Pai Written by : Kamala Chandrakant Illustrated by : Prabhakar Khanolkar

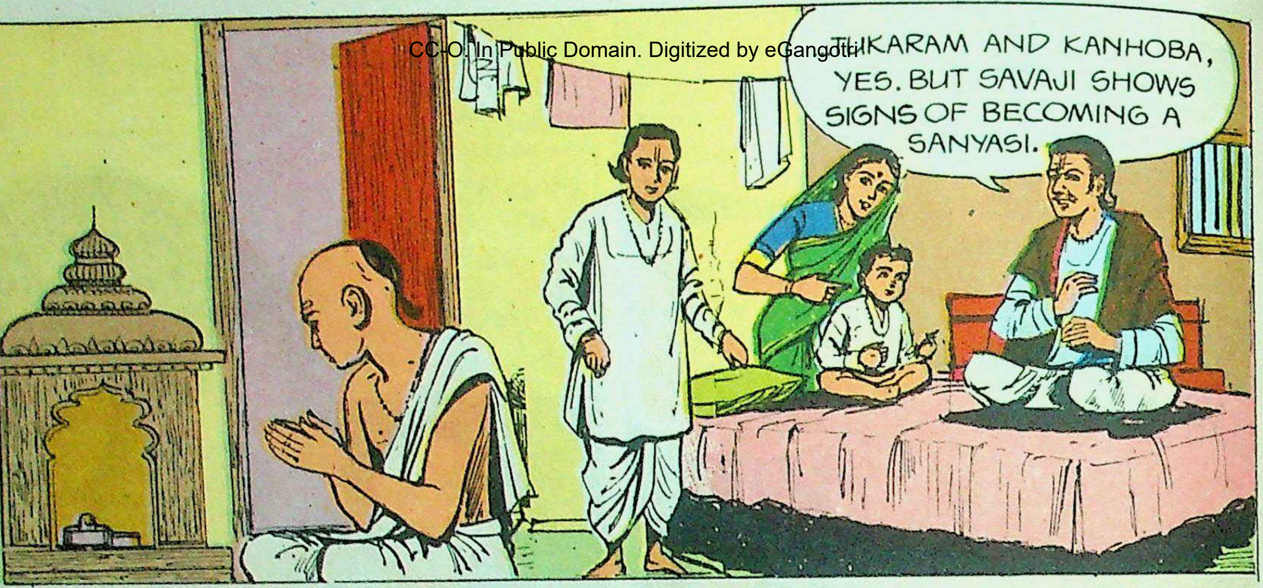
TUKARAM



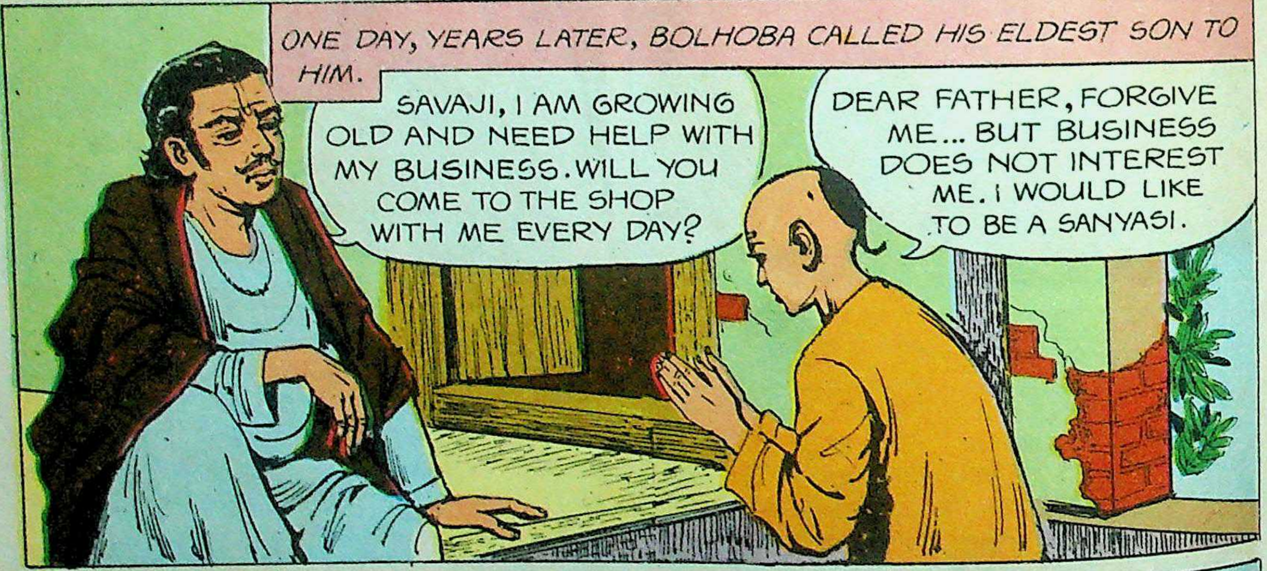
TUKARAM WAS THE SON OF BOLHOBA, A FARMER BY BIRTH, WHO HAD CHOSEN THE PROFESSION OF A GROCER. BOLHOBA AND HIS WIFE KANABAI LIVED IN DEHU, A VILLAGE NEAR POONA. THEY MADE REGULAR PILGRIMAGES TO PANDHARPUR TO PRAY FOR THE ONE BLESSING THEY LACKED IN LIFE - A CHILD.


KANA, IT IS GOOD TO BE ALIVE. OUR LIFE IS SIMPLE, YET FULL OF PEACE.
YES, MY LORD. BUT... BUT IF ONLY WE HAD A CHILD.
BE PATIENT, KANA. OUR PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED.
YES... I KNOW... BUT MY YEARNING SOMETIMES BECOMES TOO MUCH FOR ME.
THAT NIGHT, BOLHOBA'S FAITH WAS REWARDED. SHIVA, BRAHMA, AND VISHNU CAME TO HIM IN A VISION.
YOU AND YOUR WIFE HAVE PLEASED US BY YOUR DEVOTION. WE HAVE COME TO GRANT YOU A BOON. WHAT WILL YOU HAVE?
MY LORD, IF IT PLEASES YOU, A SON! A SON WHO WILL BE A COMFORT TO US IN OUR OLD AGE.
THE DEVAS WERE SILENT FOR A WHILE. THEN –
BOLHOBA, YOU SHALL HAVE THE SON YOU WISH FOR.

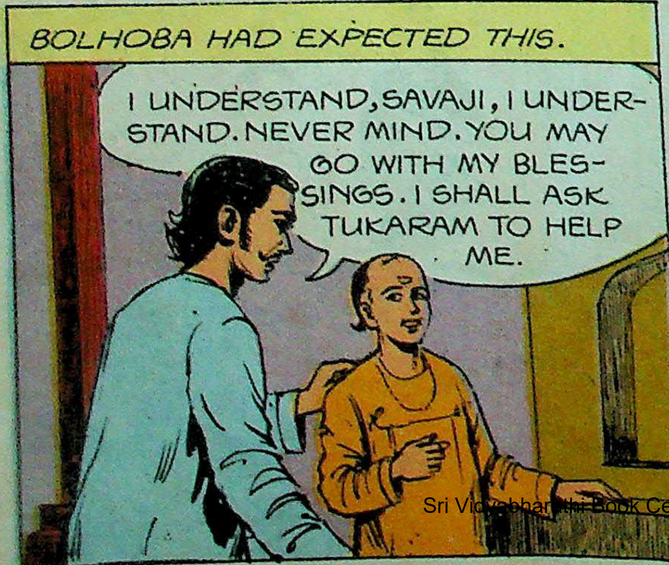

BOLHOBA COULD NOT CONTROL HIS EXCITEMENT.
KANA! KANA! WAKE UP! WE HAVE BEEN PROMISED A SON! SHIVA, VISHNU, BRAHMA...
UH? UH? WHAT? A SON? HOW? SHIVA? VISHNU? BRAHMA?
WHEN KANA WAS FULLY AWAKE, BOLHOBA TOLD HER IN DETAIL ABOUT THE VISION.
MY LORD, AT LAST OUR DESIRE WILL BE FULFILLED.
I HAD NO DOUBT IT WOULD BE, KANA.
AS EACH OF THE THREE GODS HAD PROMISED, KANA IN DUE COURSE WAS BLESSED WITH THREE SONS— SAVAJI THE GIFT OF SHIVA, TUKARAM THE GIFT OF VISHNU; AND KANHOBA THE GIFT OF BRAHMA.
THE BABIES SOON GREW UP INTO STRONG BOYS.
WE ARE FORTUNATE. SAVAJI, TUKARAM AND KANHOBA ARE GOOD BOYS AND WILL LOOK AFTER US WELL.
BEING THE GIFT OF THE GODS, THE BOYS ARE ALL GOOD. BUT ABOUT LOOKING AFTER US...WELL...


TUKARAM AND KANHOBA, YES. BUT SAVAJI SHOWS SIGNS OF BECOMING A SANYASI.

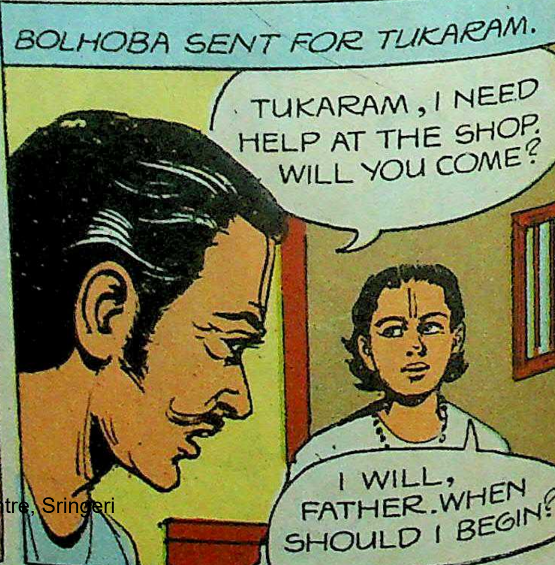
ONE DAY, YEARS LATER, BOLHOBA CALLED HIS ELDEST SON TO HIM.

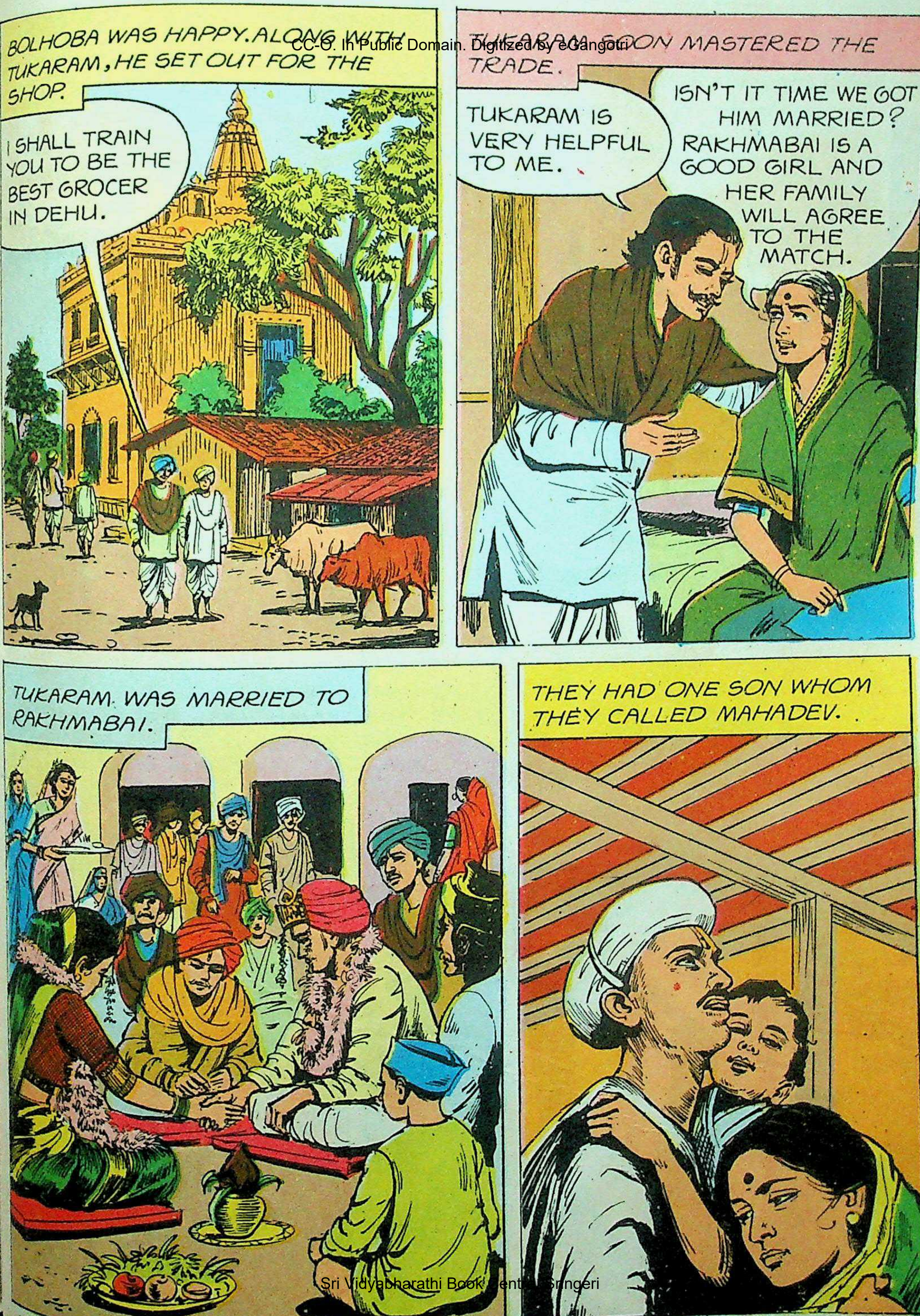

SAVAJI, I AM GROWING OLD AND NEED HELP WITH MY BUSINESS. WILL YOU COME TO THE SHOP WITH ME EVERY DAY?
DEAR FATHER, FORGIVE ME... BUT BUSINESS DOES NOT INTEREST ME. I WOULD LIKE TO BE A SANYASI.

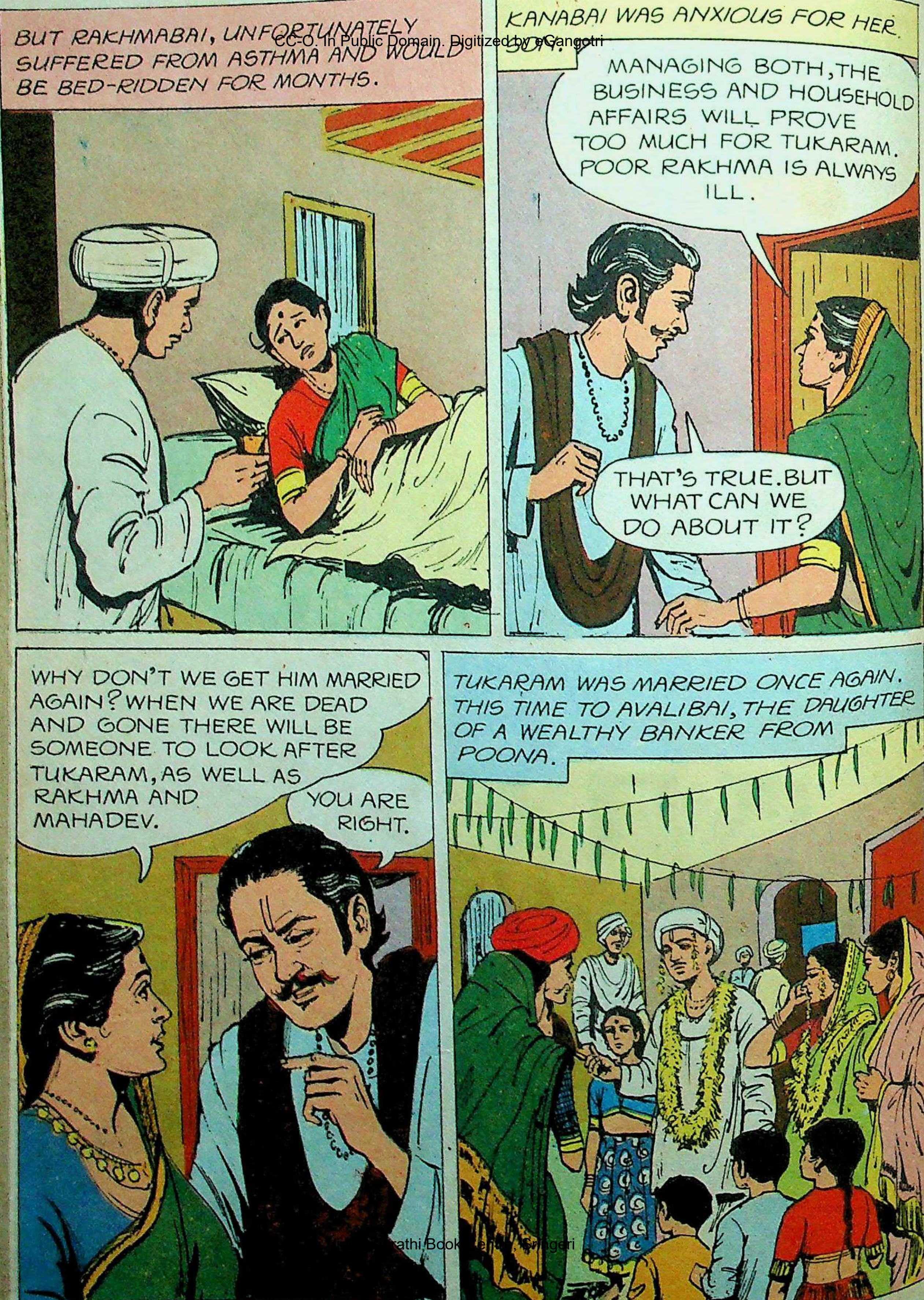
BOLHOBA HAD EXPECTED THIS.


I UNDERSTAND, SAVAJI, I UNDERSTAND. NEVER MIND. YOU MAY GO WITH MY BLESSINGS. I SHALL ASK TUKARAM TO HELP ME.

BOLHOBA SENT FOR TUKARAM.


TUKARAM, I NEED HELP AT THE SHOP. WILL YOU COME?
I WILL, FATHER. WHEN SHOULD I BEGIN?


BOLHOBA WAS HAPPY. ALONG WITH TUKARAM, HE SET OUT FOR THE SHOP.
I SHALL TRAIN YOU TO BE THE BEST GROCER IN DEHU.
TUKARAM SOON MASTERED THE TRADE.
TUKARAM IS VERY HELPFUL TO ME.
ISN'T IT TIME WE GOT HIM MARRIED? RAKHMABAI IS A GOOD GIRL AND HER FAMILY WILL AGREE TO THE MATCH.
TUKARAM WAS MARRIED TO RAKHMABAI.
THEY HAD ONE SON WHOM THEY CALLED MAHADEV.


BUT RAKHMABAI, UNFORTUNATELY SUFFERED FROM ASTHMA AND WOULD BE BED-RIDDEN FOR MONTHS.
KANABAI WAS ANXIOUS FOR HER SON.
MANAGING BOTH, THE BUSINESS AND HOUSEHOLD AFFAIRS WILL PROVE TOO MUCH FOR TUKARAM. POOR RAKHMA IS ALWAYS ILL.
THAT'S TRUE. BUT WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?
WHY DON'T WE GET HIM MARRIED AGAIN? WHEN WE ARE DEAD AND GONE THERE WILL BE SOMEONE TO LOOK AFTER TUKARAM, AS WELL AS RAKHMA AND MAHADEV.
YOU ARE RIGHT.
TUKARAM WAS MARRIED ONCE AGAIN. THIS TIME TO AVALIBAI, THE DAUGHTER OF A WEALTHY BANKER FROM POONA.

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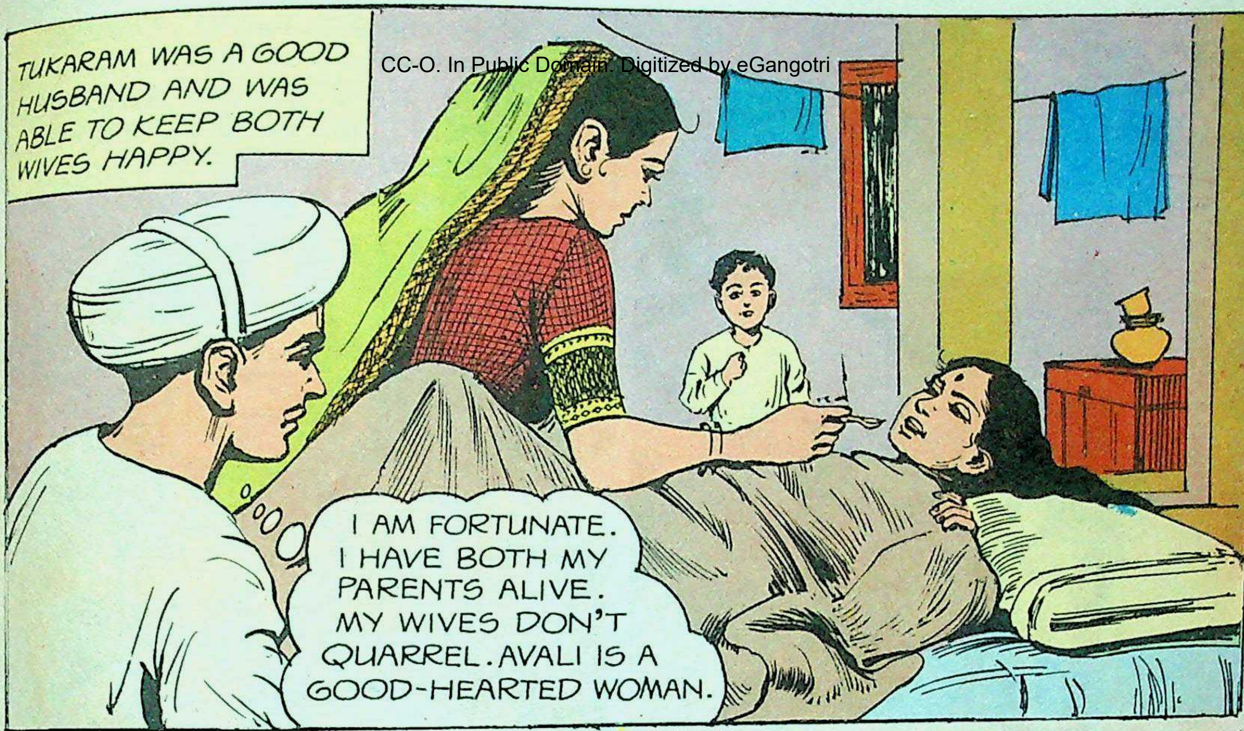
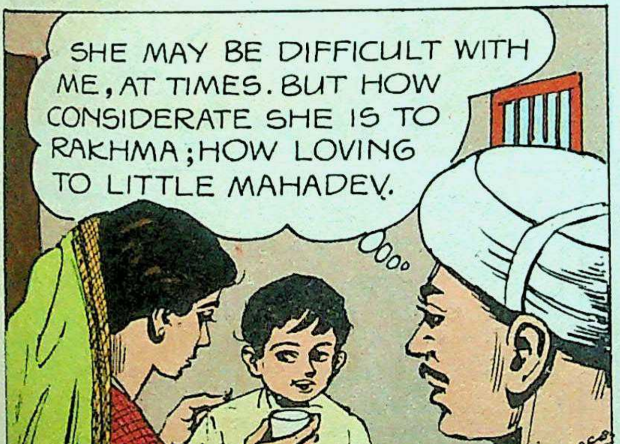
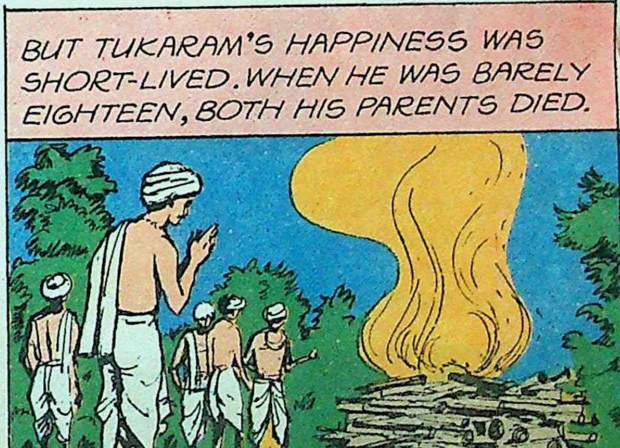
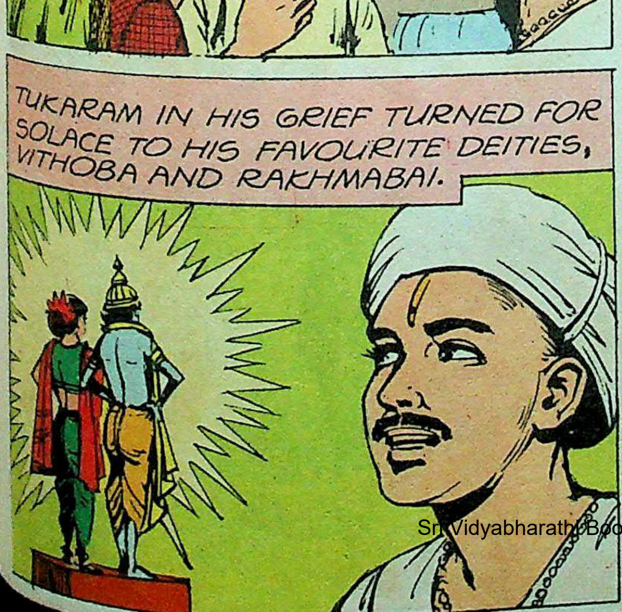
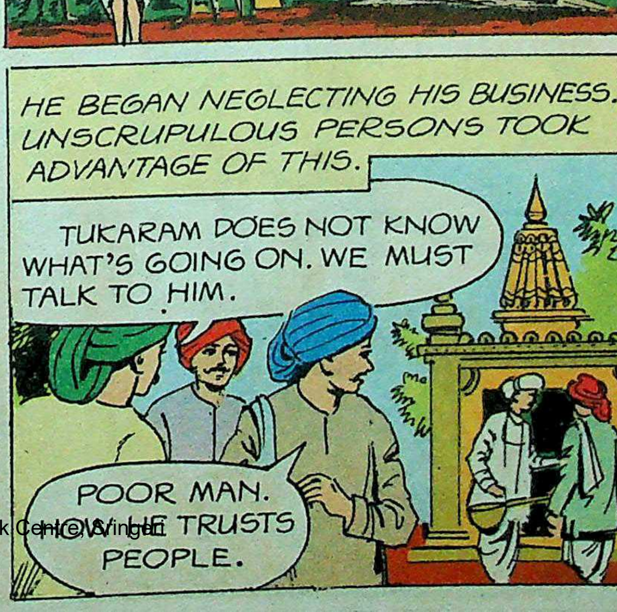
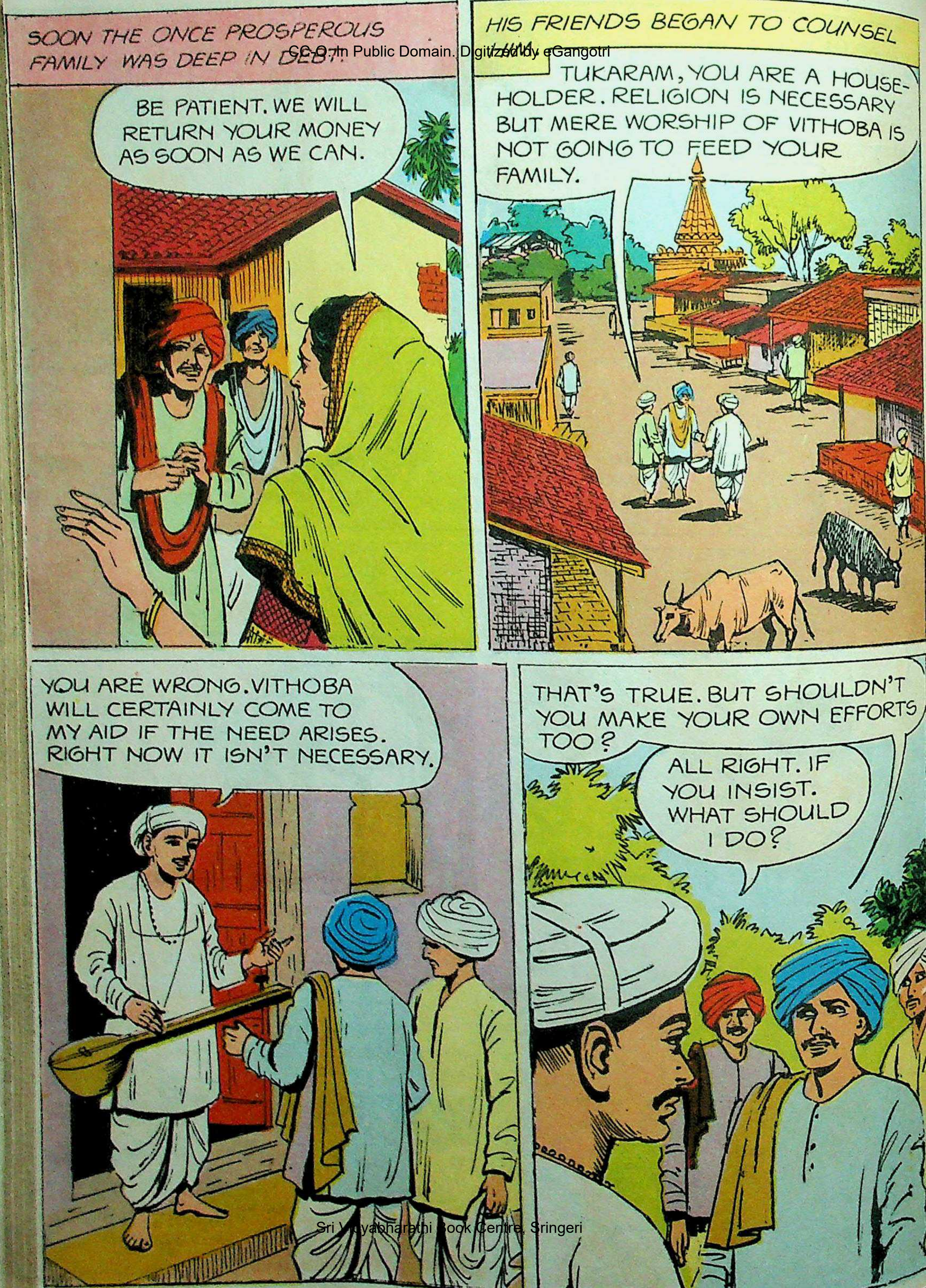

TUKARAM WAS A GOOD HUSBAND AND WAS ABLE TO KEEP BOTH WIVES HAPPY.
I AM FORTUNATE. I HAVE BOTH MY PARENTS ALIVE. MY WIVES DON'T QUARREL. AVALI IS A GOOD-HEARTED WOMAN.

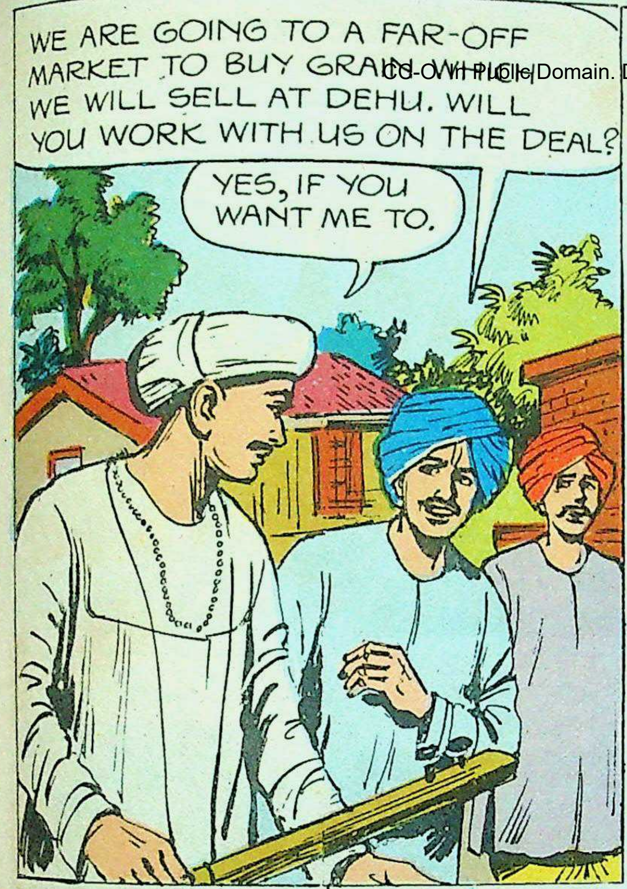

SHE MAY BE DIFFICULT WITH ME, AT TIMES. BUT HOW CONSIDERATE SHE IS TO RAKHMA; HOW LOVING TO LITTLE MAHADEV.


BUT TUKARAM'S HAPPINESS WAS SHORT-LIVED. WHEN HE WAS BARELY EIGHTEEN, BOTH HIS PARENTS DIED.

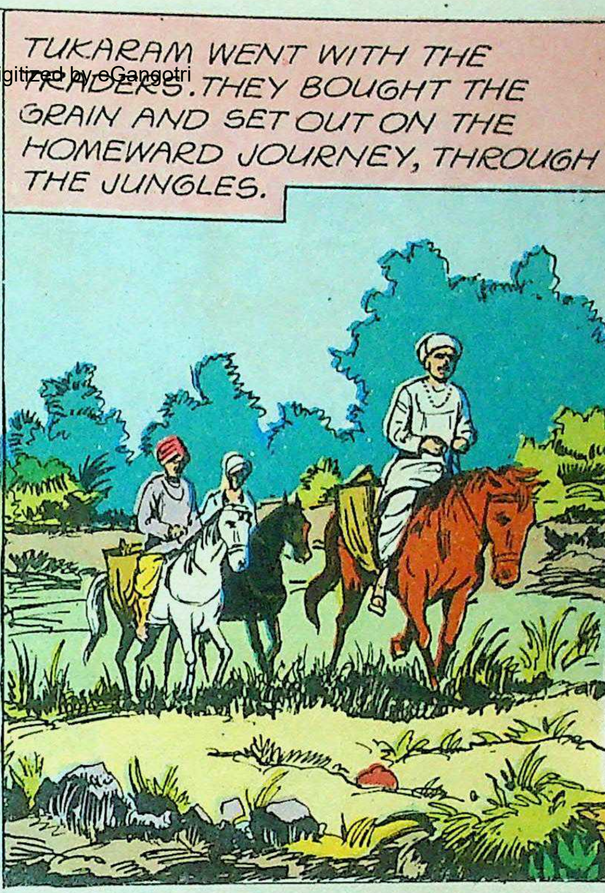

TUKARAM IN HIS GRIEF TURNED FOR SOLACE TO HIS FAVOURITE DEITIES, VITHOBA AND RAKHMABAI.


HE BEGAN NEGLECTING HIS BUSINESS. UNSCRUPULOUS PERSONS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS.
TUKARAM DOES NOT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON. WE MUST TALK TO HIM.
POOR MAN. HOW HE TRUSTS PEOPLE.

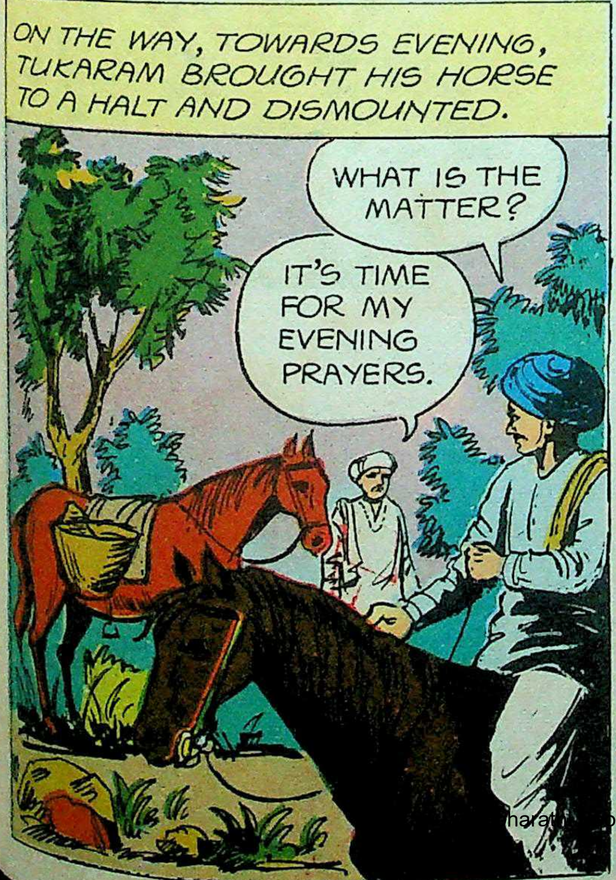

SOON THE ONCE PROSPEROUS FAMILY WAS DEEP IN DEBT.
BE PATIENT. WE WILL RETURN YOUR MONEY AS SOON AS WE CAN.
HIS FRIENDS BEGAN TO COUNSEL HIM.
TUKARAM, YOU ARE A HOUSEHOLDER. RELIGION IS NECESSARY BUT MERE WORSHIP OF VITHOBA IS NOT GOING TO FEED YOUR FAMILY.
YOU ARE WRONG. VITHOBA WILL CERTAINLY COME TO MY AID IF THE NEED ARISES. RIGHT NOW IT ISN'T NECESSARY.
THAT'S TRUE. BUT SHOULDN'T YOU MAKE YOUR OWN EFFORTS TOO?
ALL RIGHT. IF YOU INSIST. WHAT SHOULD I DO?


WE ARE GOING TO A FAR-OFF MARKET TO BUY GRAIN WHICH WE WILL SELL AT DEHU. WILL YOU WORK WITH US ON THE DEAL?
YES, IF YOU WANT ME TO.

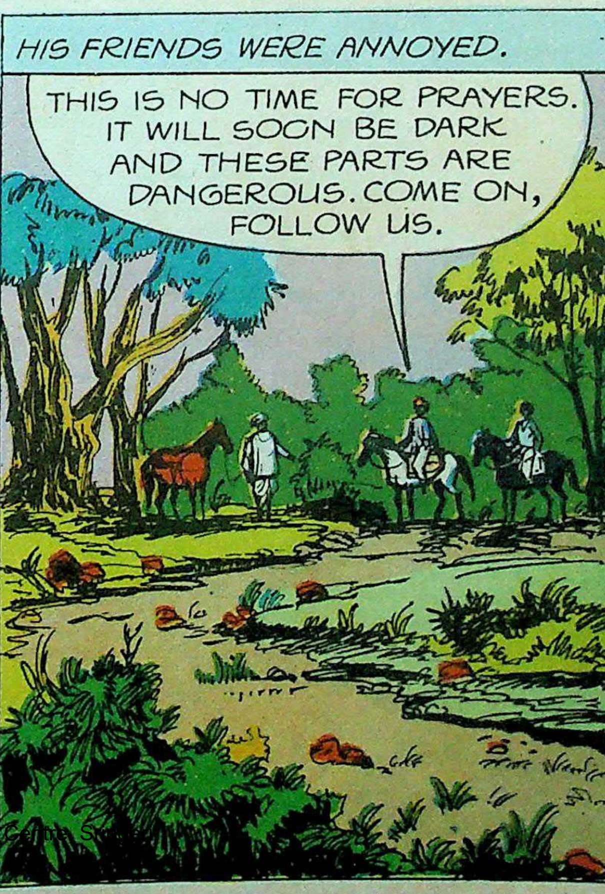
TUKARAM WENT WITH THE TRADERS. THEY BOUGHT THE GRAIN AND SET OUT ON THE HOMEWARD JOURNEY, THROUGH THE JUNGLES.



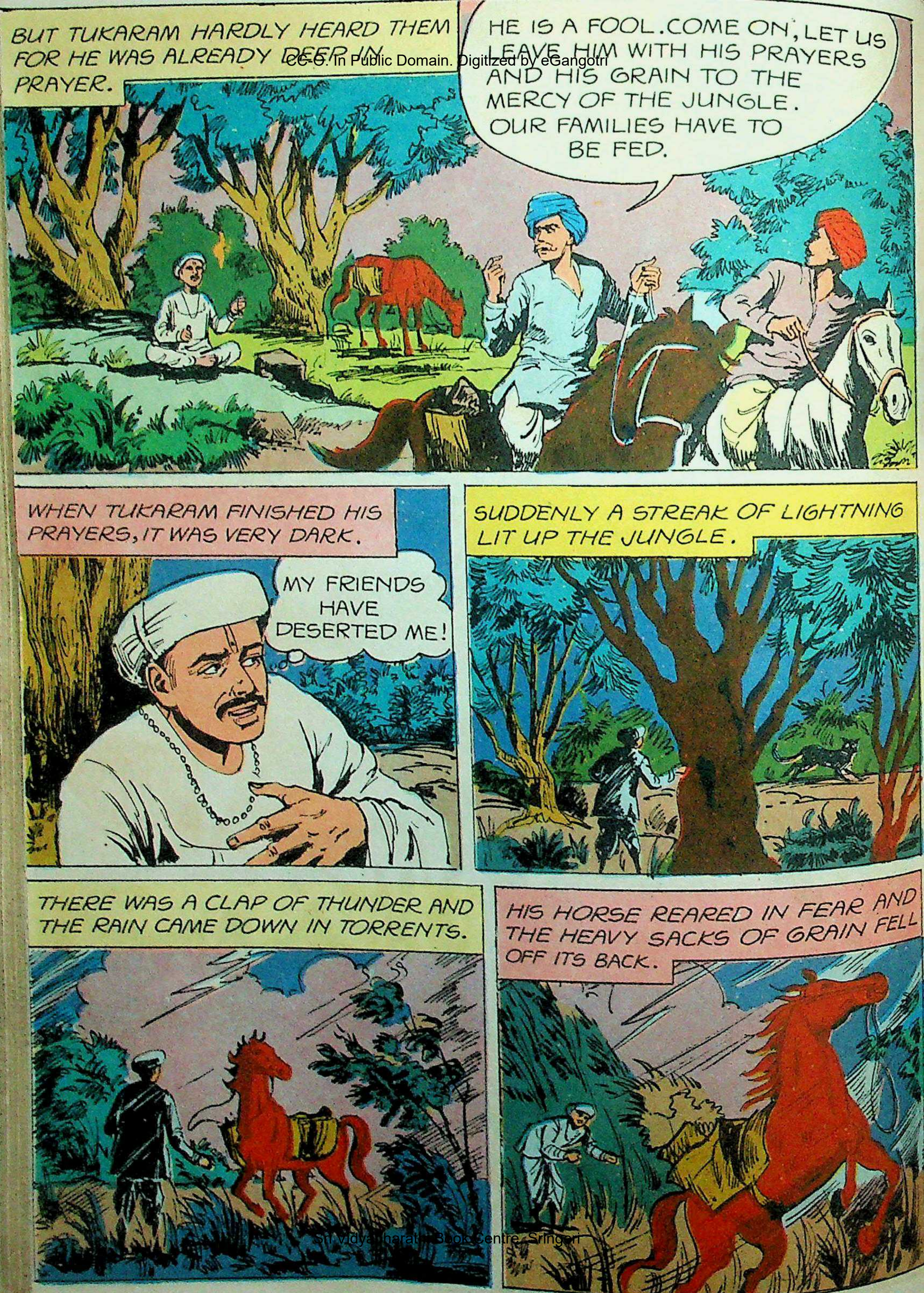
ON THE WAY, TOWARDS EVENING, TUKARAM BROUGHT HIS HORSE TO A HALT AND DISMOUNTED.

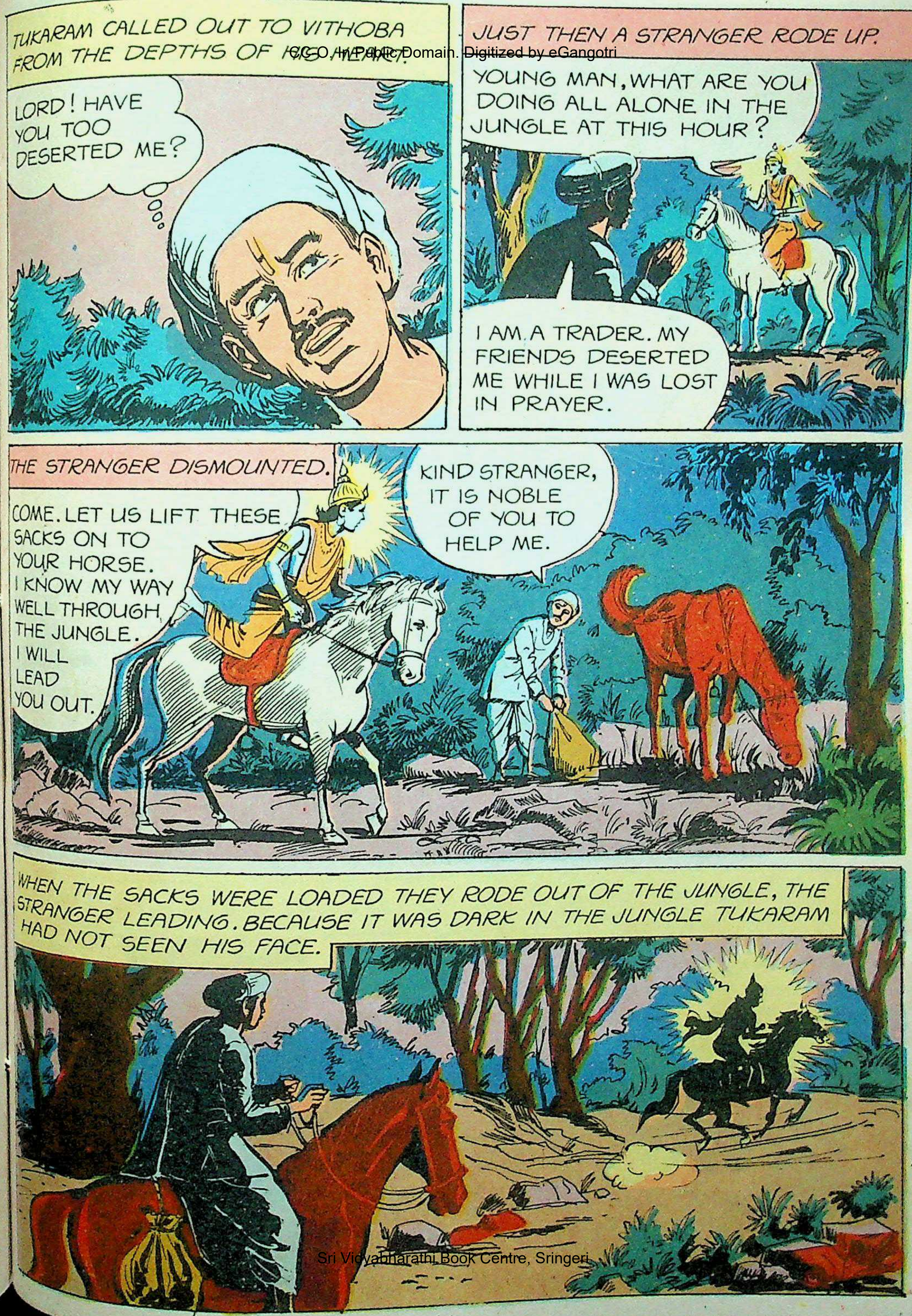

WHAT IS THE MATTER?
IT'S TIME FOR MY EVENING PRAYERS.

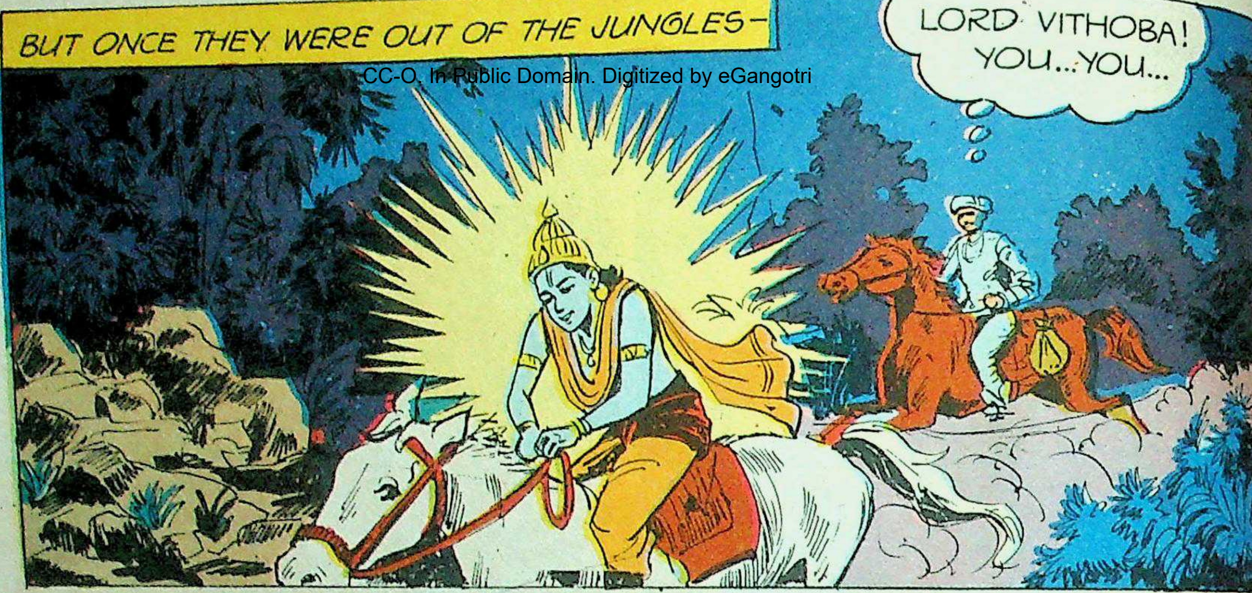
HIS FRIENDS WERE ANNOYED.


THIS IS NO TIME FOR PRAYERS. IT WILL SOON BE DARK AND THESE PARTS ARE DANGEROUS. COME ON, FOLLOW US.

harath ok Centre, Sr

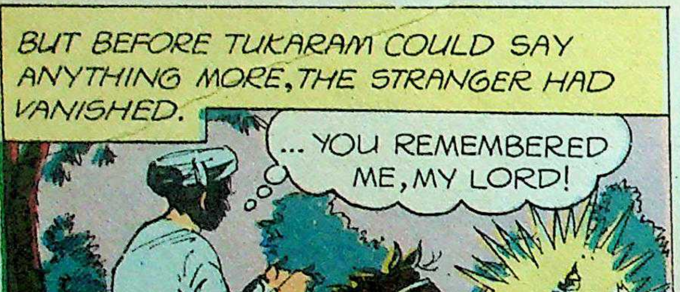

BUT TUKARAM HARDLY HEARD THEM FOR HE WAS ALREADY DEEP IN PRAYER.
HE IS A FOOL. COME ON, LET US LEAVE HIM WITH HIS PRAYERS AND HIS GRAIN TO THE MERCY OF THE JUNGLE. OUR FAMILIES HAVE TO BE FED.
WHEN TUKARAM FINISHED HIS PRAYERS, IT WAS VERY DARK.
MY FRIENDS HAVE DESERTED ME!
SUDDENLY A STREAK OF LIGHTNING LIT UP THE JUNGLE.
THERE WAS A CLAP OF THUNDER AND THE RAIN CAME DOWN IN TORRENTS.
HIS HORSE REARED IN FEAR AND THE HEAVY SACKS OF GRAIN FELL OFF ITS BACK.


TUKARAM CALLED OUT TO VITHOBA FROM THE DEPTHS OF HIS HEART.
LORD! HAVE YOU TOO DESERTED ME?
JUST THEN A STRANGER RODE UP.
YOUNG MAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING ALL ALONE IN THE JUNGLE AT THIS HOUR?
I AM A TRADER. MY FRIENDS DESERTED ME WHILE I WAS LOST IN PRAYER.
THE STRANGER DISMOUNTED.
COME. LET US LIFT THESE SACKS ON TO YOUR HORSE. I KNOW MY WAY WELL THROUGH THE JUNGLE. I WILL LEAD YOU OUT.
KIND STRANGER, IT IS NOBLE OF YOU TO HELP ME.
WHEN THE SACKS WERE LOADED THEY RODE OUT OF THE JUNGLE, THE STRANGER LEADING. BECAUSE IT WAS DARK IN THE JUNGLE TUKARAM HAD NOT SEEN HIS FACE.



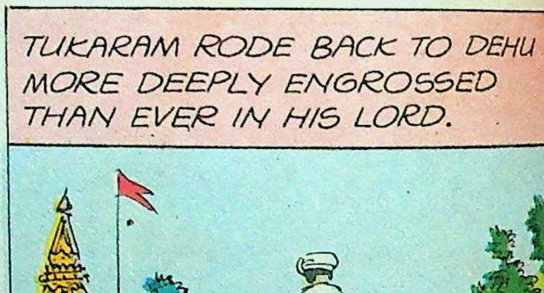
BUT ONCE THEY WERE OUT OF THE JUNGLES–

LORD VITHOBA! YOU...YOU...

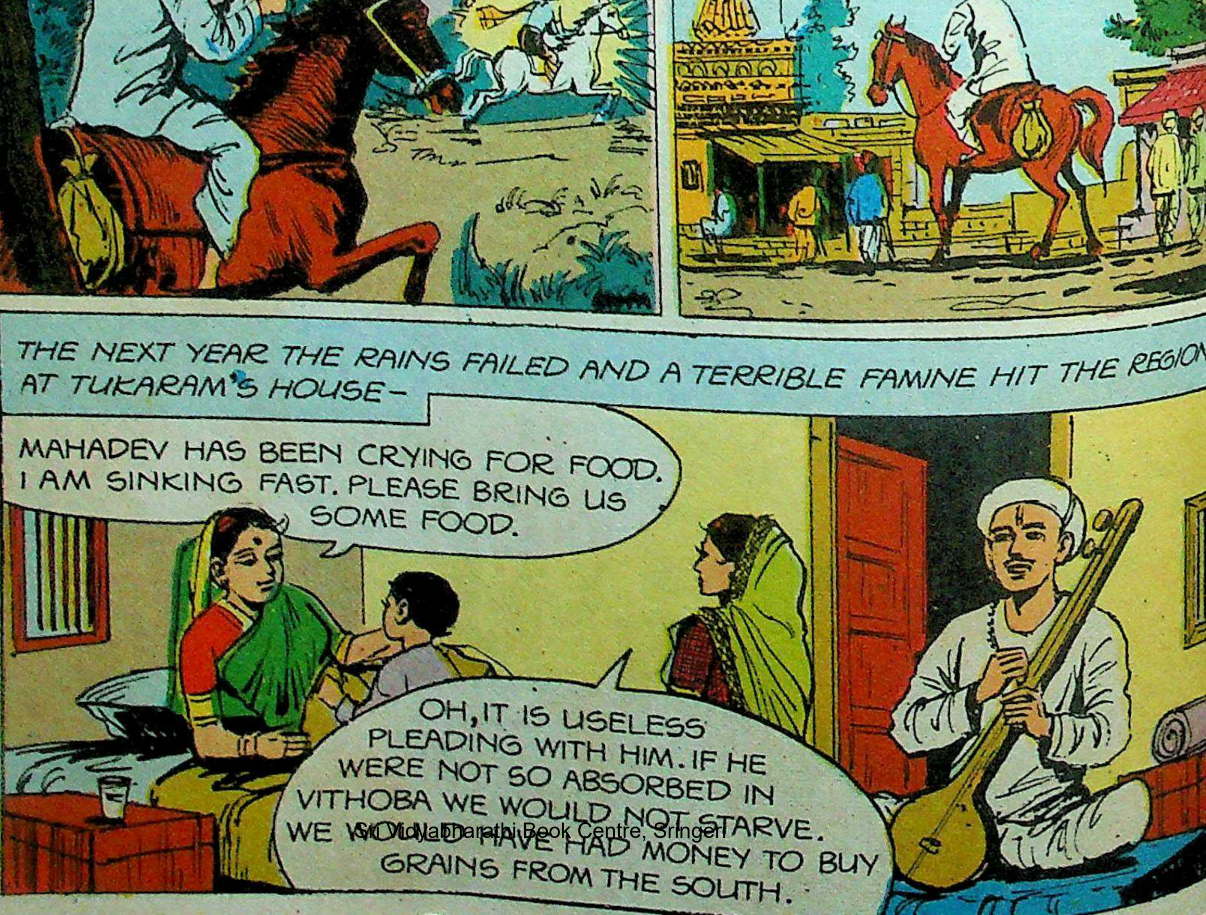


BUT BEFORE TUKARAM COULD SAY ANYTHING MORE, THE STRANGER HAD VANISHED.

... YOU REMEMBERED ME, MY LORD!

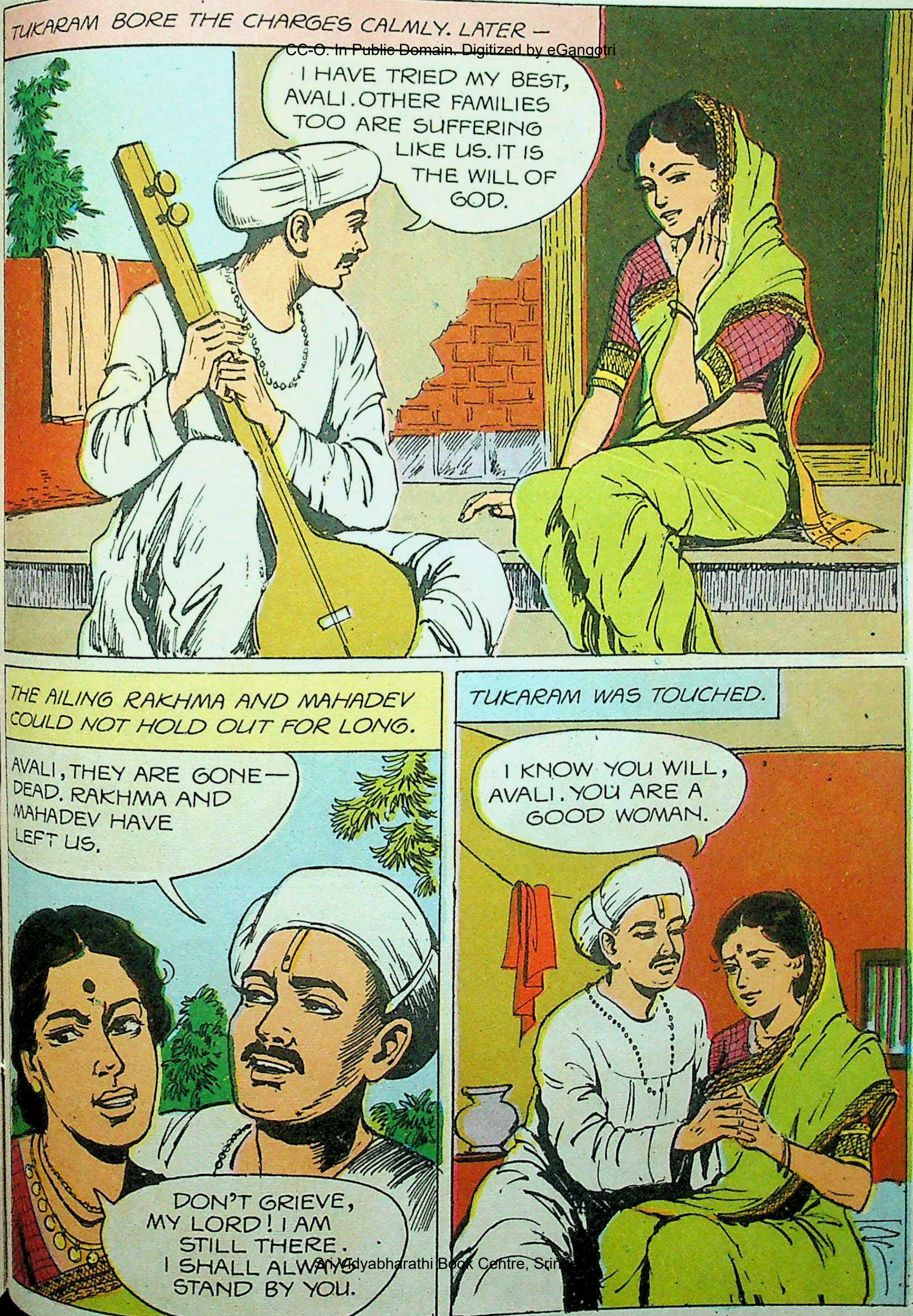


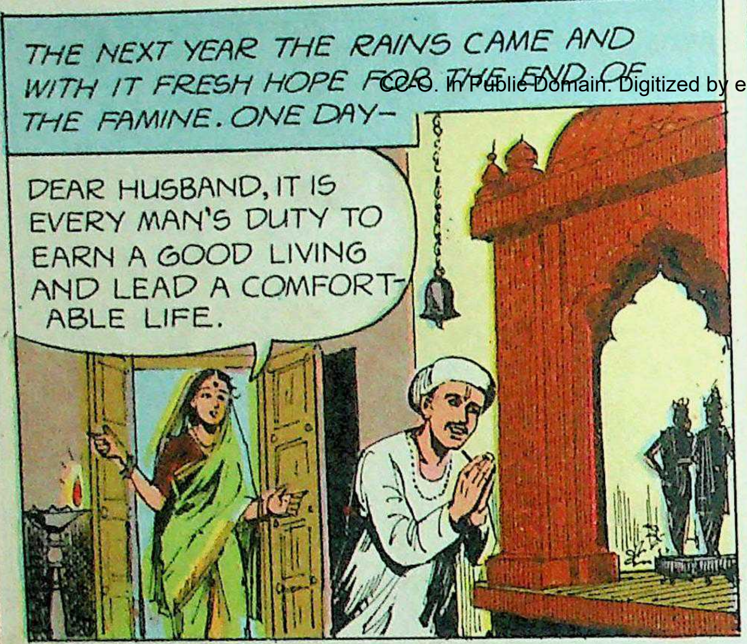
TUKARAM RODE BACK TO DEHU MORE DEEPLY ENGROSSED THAN EVER IN HIS LORD.

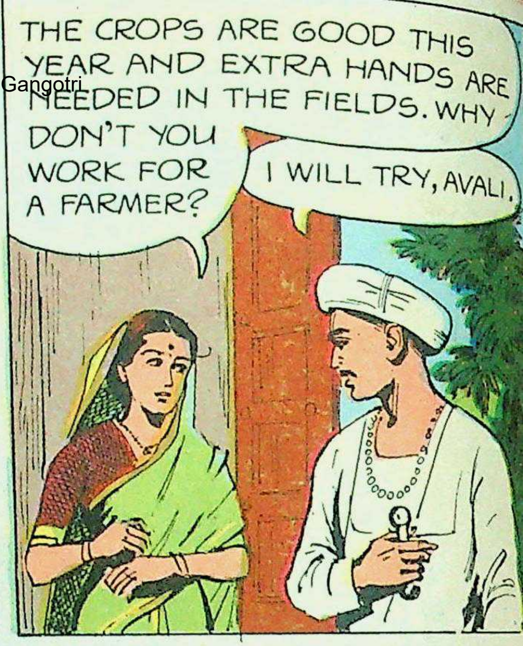


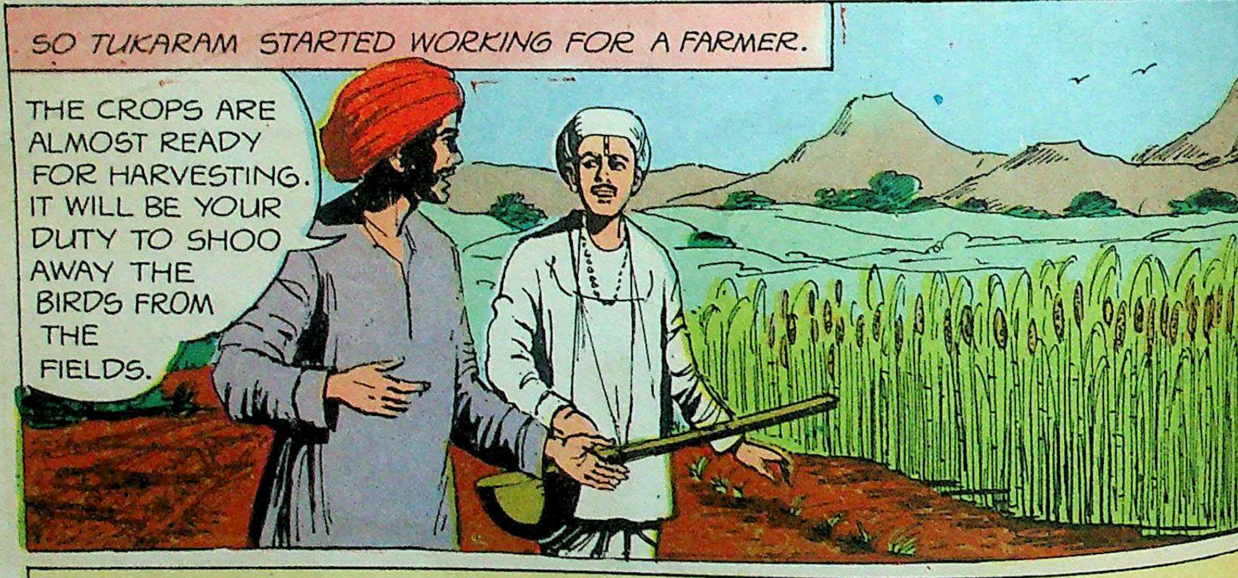
THE NEXT YEAR THE RAINS FAILED AND A TERRIBLE FAMINE HIT THE REGION AT TUKARAM'S HOUSE–

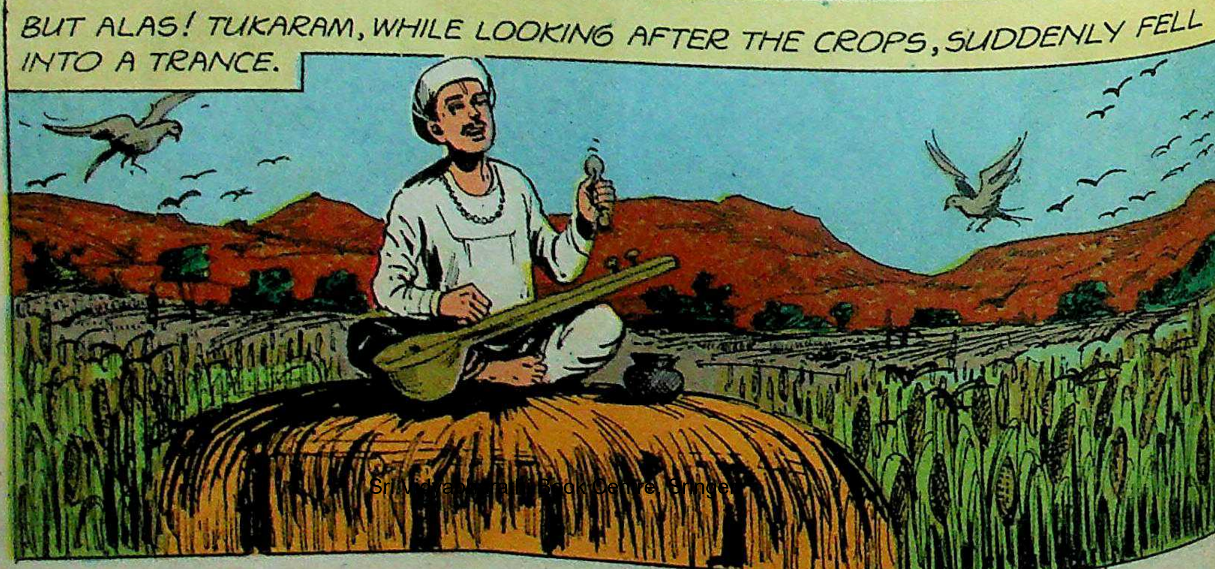
MAHADEV HAS BEEN CRYING FOR FOOD. I AM SINKING FAST. PLEASE BRING US SOME FOOD.
OH, IT IS USELESS PLEADING WITH HIM. IF HE WERE NOT SO ABSORBED IN VITHOBA WE WOULD NOT STARVE. WE WOULD HAVE HAD MONEY TO BUY GRAINS FROM THE SOUTH.

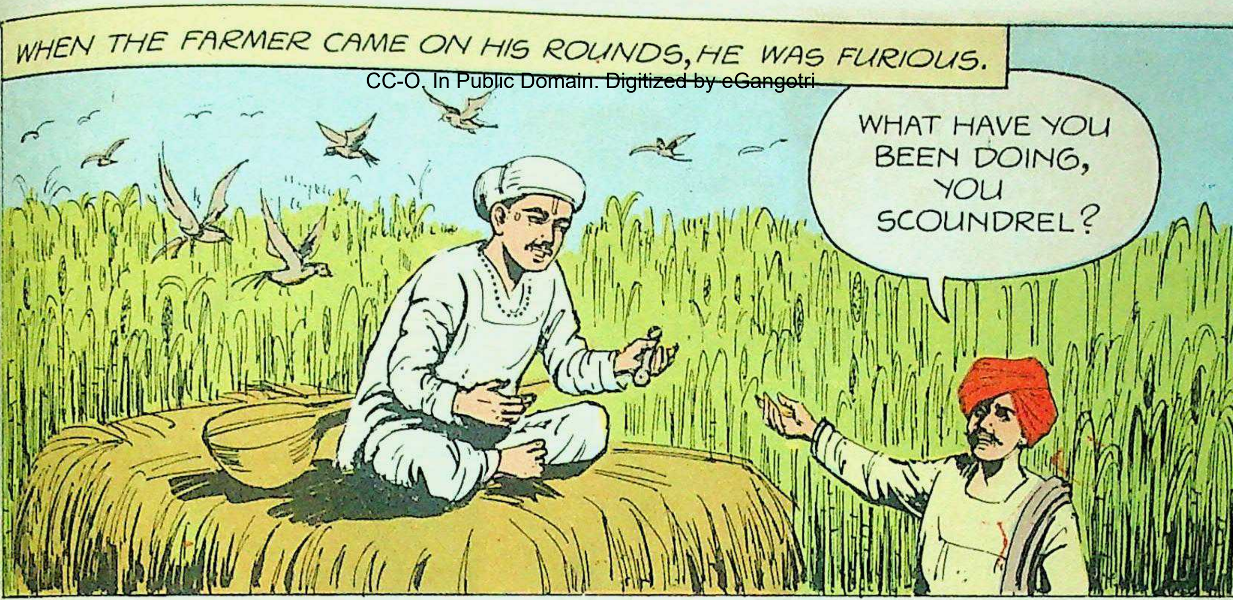

TUKARAM BORE THE CHARGES CALMLY. LATER —
I HAVE TRIED MY BEST, AVALI. OTHER FAMILIES TOO ARE SUFFERING LIKE US. IT IS THE WILL OF GOD.
THE AILING RAKHMA AND MAHADEV COULD NOT HOLD OUT FOR LONG.
AVALI, THEY ARE GONE — DEAD. RAKHMA AND MAHADEV HAVE LEFT US.
DON'T GRIEVE, MY LORD! I AM STILL THERE. I SHALL ALWAYS STAND BY YOU.
TUKARAM WAS TOUCHED.
I KNOW YOU WILL, AVALI. YOU ARE A GOOD WOMAN.

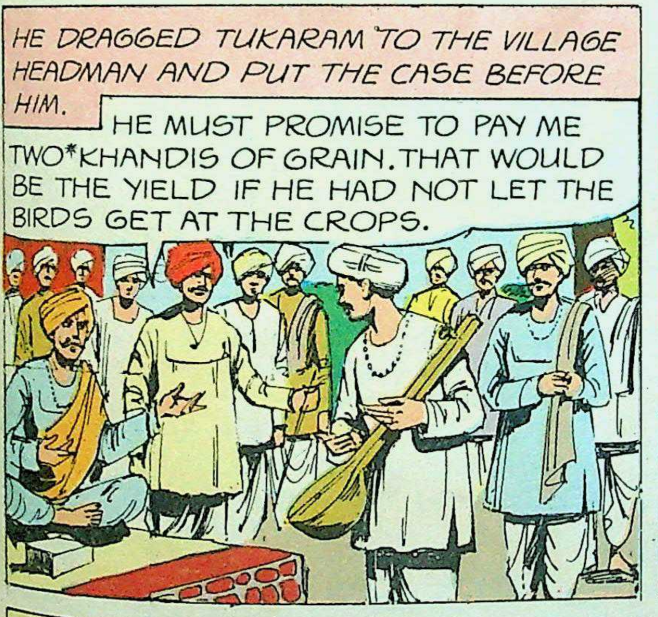

THE NEXT YEAR THE RAINS CAME AND WITH IT FRESH HOPE FOR THE END OF THE FAMINE. ONE DAY–
DEAR HUSBAND, IT IS EVERY MAN'S DUTY TO EARN A GOOD LIVING AND LEAD A COMFORTABLE LIFE.

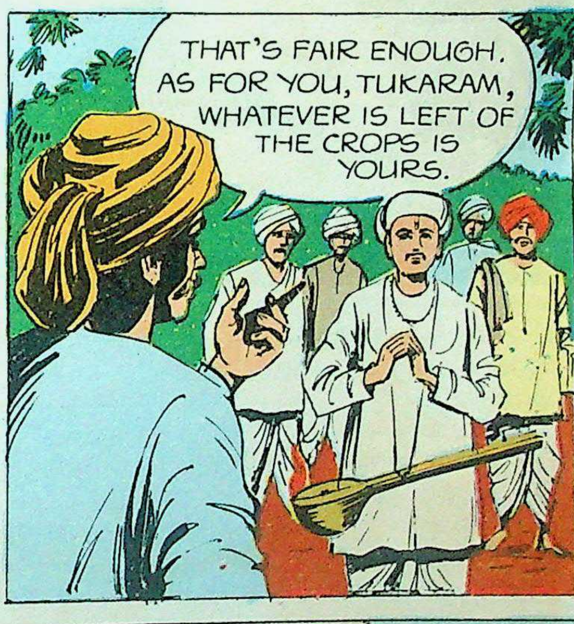

THE CROPS ARE GOOD THIS YEAR AND EXTRA HANDS ARE NEEDED IN THE FIELDS. WHY DON'T YOU WORK FOR A FARMER?
I WILL TRY, AVALI.

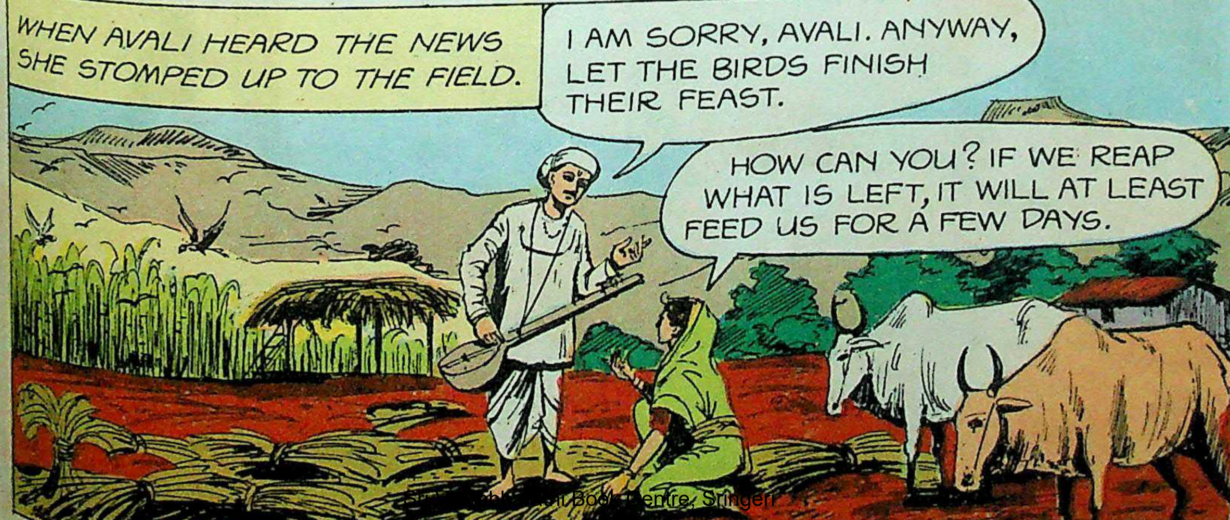

SO TUKARAM STARTED WORKING FOR A FARMER.
THE CROPS ARE ALMOST READY FOR HARVESTING. IT WILL BE YOUR DUTY TO SHOO AWAY THE BIRDS FROM THE FIELDS.


BUT ALAS! TUKARAM, WHILE LOOKING AFTER THE CROPS, SUDDENLY FELL INTO A TRANCE.


WHEN THE FARMER CAME ON HIS ROUNDS, HE WAS FURIOUS.
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING, YOU SCOUNDREL?


HE DRAGGED TUKARAM TO THE VILLAGE HEADMAN AND PUT THE CASE BEFORE HIM.
HE MUST PROMISE TO PAY ME TWO*KHANDIS OF GRAIN. THAT WOULD BE THE YIELD IF HE HAD NOT LET THE BIRDS GET AT THE CROPS.


THAT'S FAIR ENOUGH. AS FOR YOU, TUKARAM, WHATEVER IS LEFT OF THE CROPS IS YOURS.


WHEN AVALI HEARD THE NEWS SHE STOMPED UP TO THE FIELD.
I AM SORRY, AVALI. ANYWAY, LET THE BIRDS FINISH THEIR FEAST.
HOW CAN YOU? IF WE REAP WHAT IS LEFT, IT WILL AT LEAST FEED US FOR A FEW DAYS.

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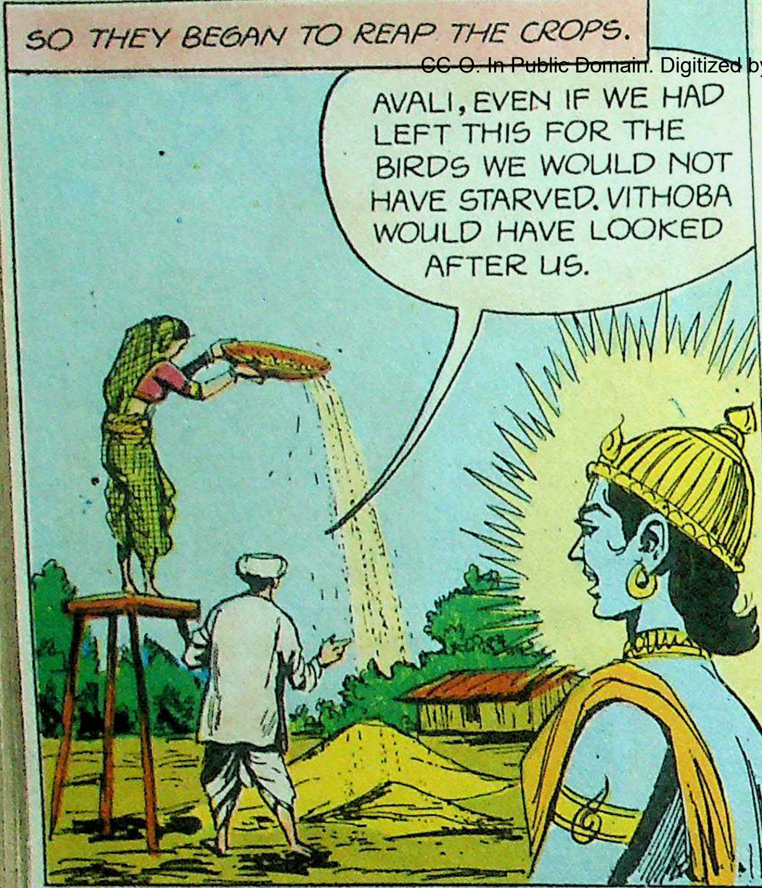
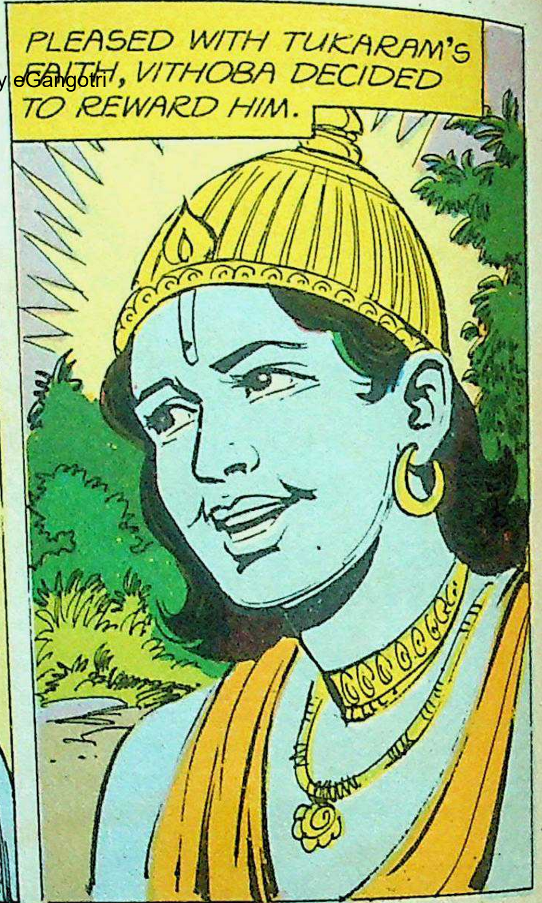
* ROUGHLY 750 KGS.

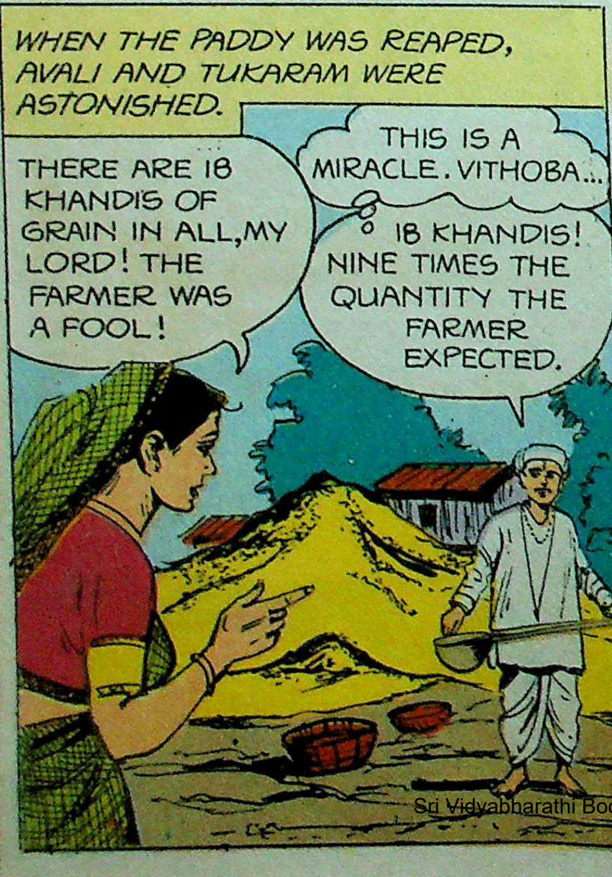


SO THEY BEGAN TO REAP THE CROPS.

AVALI, EVEN IF WE HAD LEFT THIS FOR THE BIRDS WE WOULD NOT HAVE STARVED. VITHOBA WOULD HAVE LOOKED AFTER US.

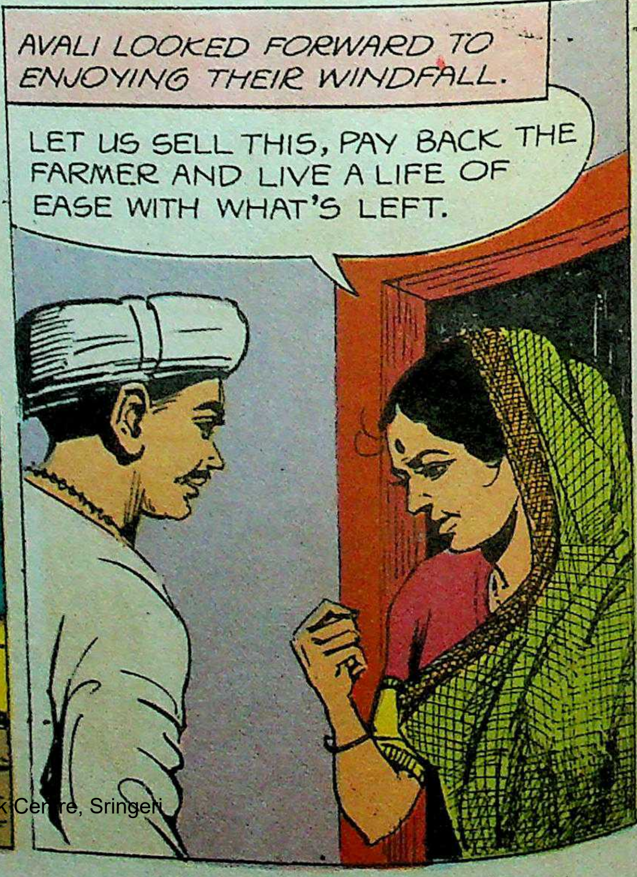


PLEASED WITH TUKARAM'S FAITH, VITHOBA DECIDED TO REWARD HIM.



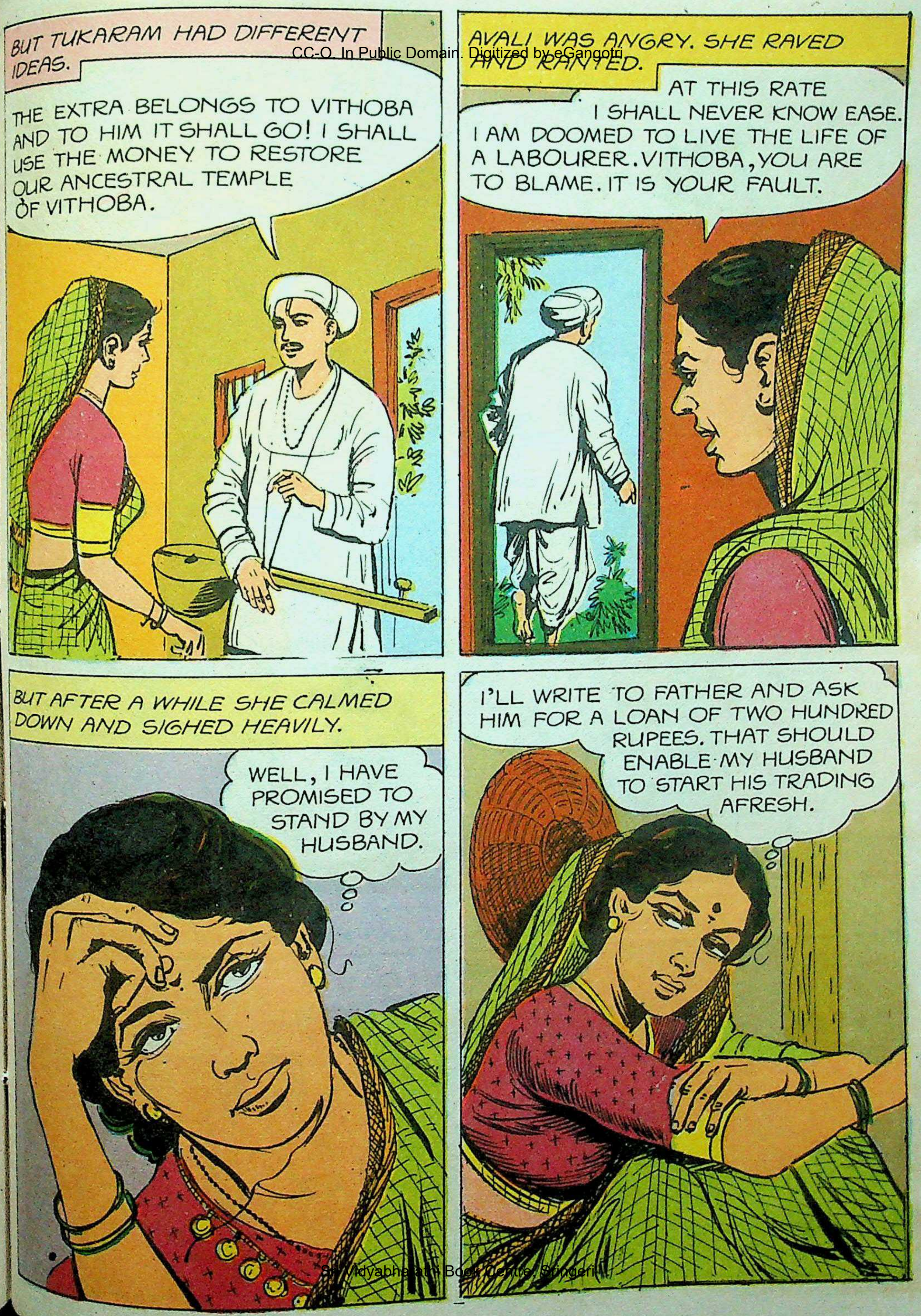
WHEN THE PADDY WAS REAPED, AVALI AND TUKARAM WERE ASTONISHED.

THERE ARE 18 KHANDIS OF GRAIN IN ALL, MY LORD! THE FARMER WAS A FOOL!
THIS IS A MIRACLE. VITHOBA...
18 KHANDIS! NINE TIMES THE QUANTITY THE FARMER EXPECTED.



AVALI LOOKED FORWARD TO ENJOYING THEIR WINDFALL.

LET US SELL THIS, PAY BACK THE FARMER AND LIVE A LIFE OF EASE WITH WHAT'S LEFT.


BUT TUKARAM HAD DIFFERENT IDEAS.
THE EXTRA BELONGS TO VITHOBA AND TO HIM IT SHALL GO! I SHALL USE THE MONEY TO RESTORE OUR ANCESTRAL TEMPLE OF VITHOBA.
AVALI WAS ANGRY. SHE RAVED AND RANTED.
AT THIS RATE I SHALL NEVER KNOW EASE. I AM DOOMED TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A LABOURER. VITHOBA, YOU ARE TO BLAME. IT IS YOUR FAULT.
BUT AFTER A WHILE SHE CALMED DOWN AND SIGHED HEAVILY.
WELL, I HAVE PROMISED TO STAND BY MY HUSBAND.
I'LL WRITE TO FATHER AND ASK HIM FOR A LOAN OF TWO HUNDRED RUPEES. THAT SHOULD ENABLE MY HUSBAND TO START HIS TRADING AFRESH.

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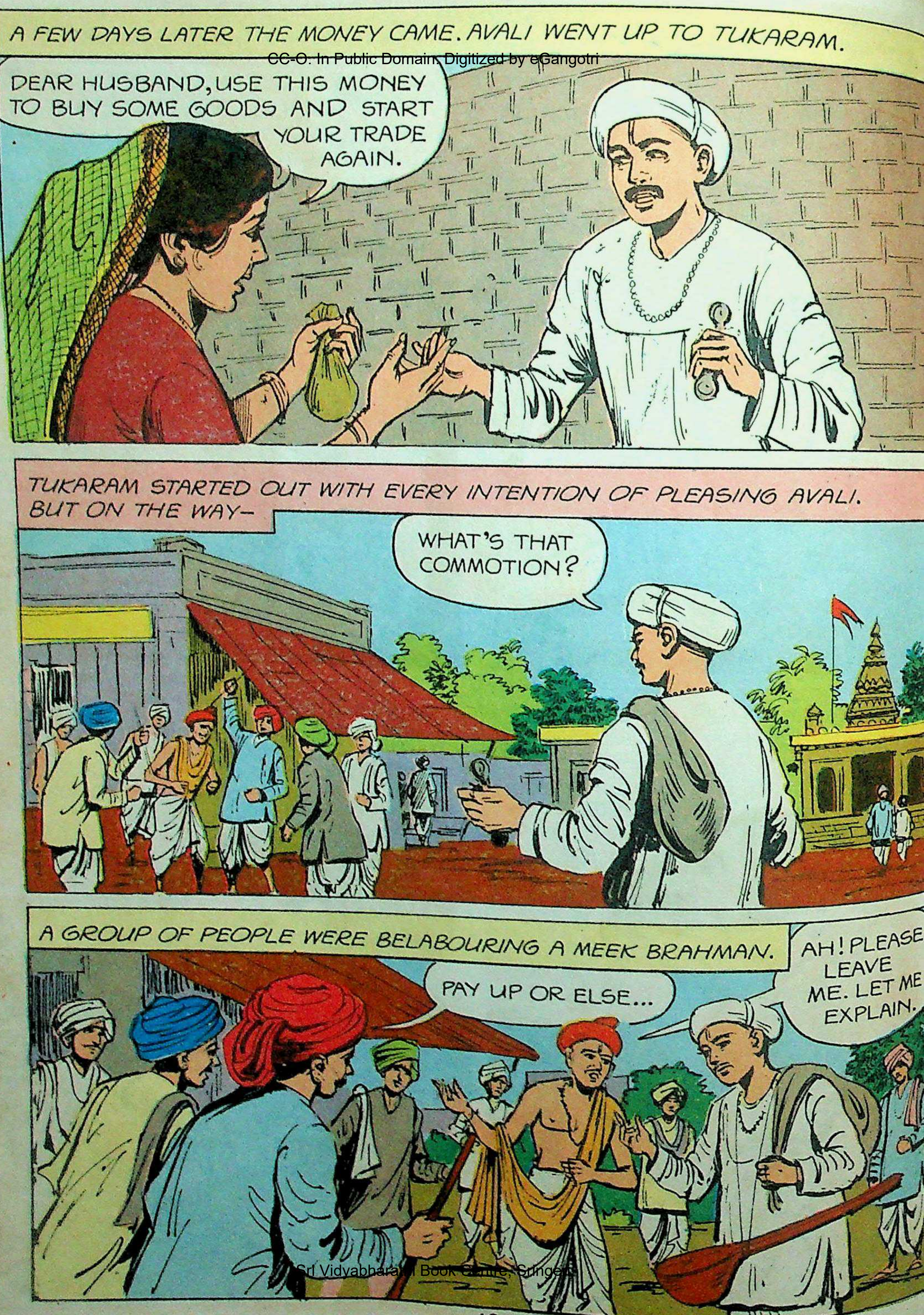
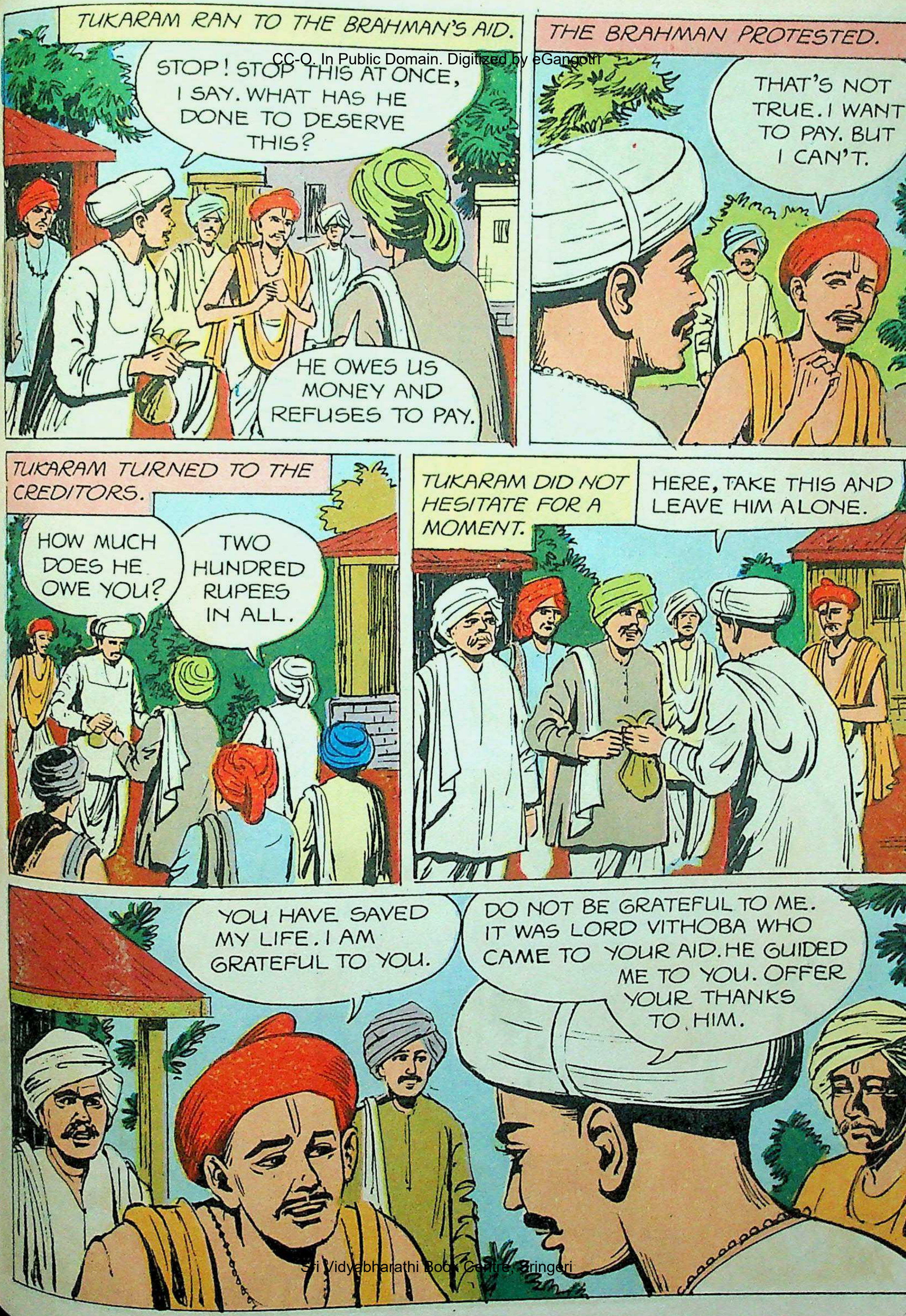
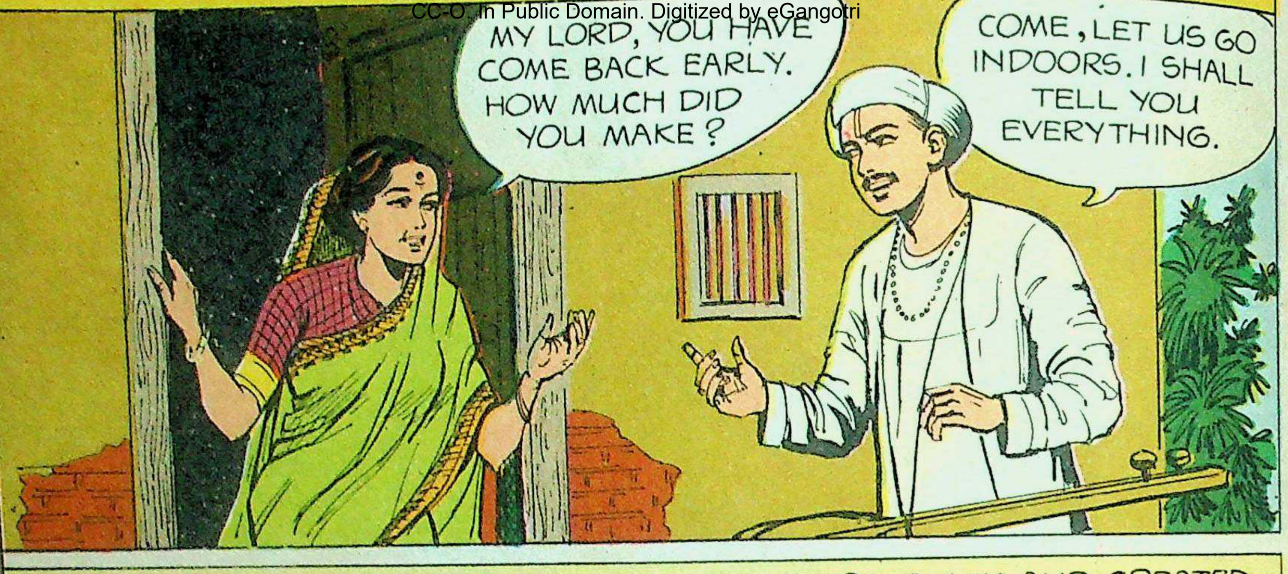
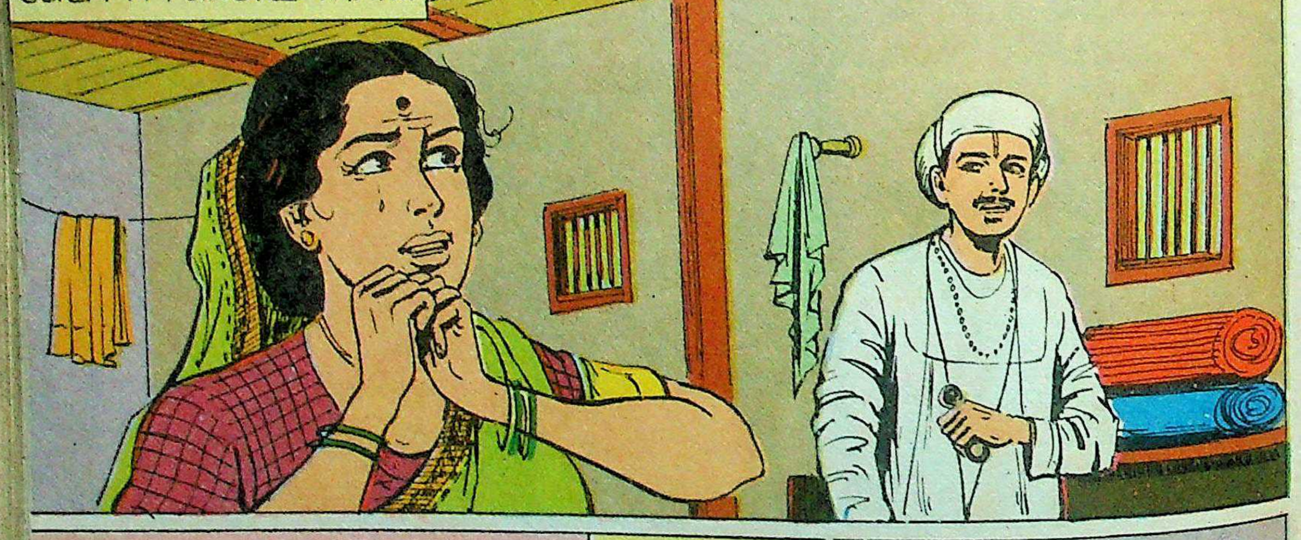

A FEW DAYS LATER THE MONEY CAME. AVALI WENT UP TO TUKARAM.
DEAR HUSBAND, USE THIS MONEY TO BUY SOME GOODS AND START YOUR TRADE AGAIN.
TUKARAM STARTED OUT WITH EVERY INTENTION OF PLEASING AVALI. BUT ON THE WAY–
WHAT'S THAT COMMOTION?
A GROUP OF PEOPLE WERE BELABOURING A MEEK BRAHMAN.
PAY UP OR ELSE...
AH! PLEASE LEAVE ME. LET ME EXPLAIN.


TUKARAM RAN TO THE BRAHMAN'S AID.
STOP! STOP THIS AT ONCE, I SAY. WHAT HAS HE DONE TO DESERVE THIS?
HE OWES US MONEY AND REFUSES TO PAY.
THE BRAHMAN PROTESTED.
THAT'S NOT TRUE. I WANT TO PAY. BUT I CAN'T.
TUKARAM TURNED TO THE CREDITORS.
HOW MUCH DOES HE OWE YOU?
TWO HUNDRED RUPEES IN ALL.
TUKARAM DID NOT HESITATE FOR A MOMENT.
HERE, TAKE THIS AND LEAVE HIM ALONE.
YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE. I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU.
DO NOT BE GRATEFUL TO ME. IT WAS LORD VITHOBA WHO CAME TO YOUR AID. HE GUIDED ME TO YOU. OFFER YOUR THANKS TO HIM.

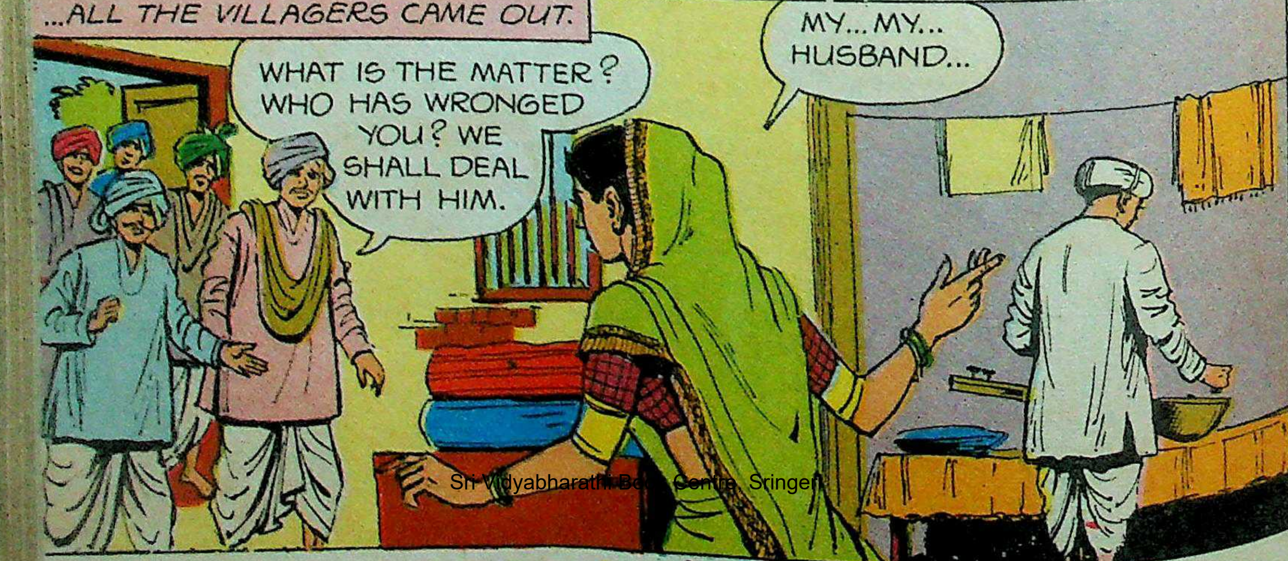
AND TUKARAM RETURNED HOME. AVALI WAS EAGERLY WAITING FOR HIM.

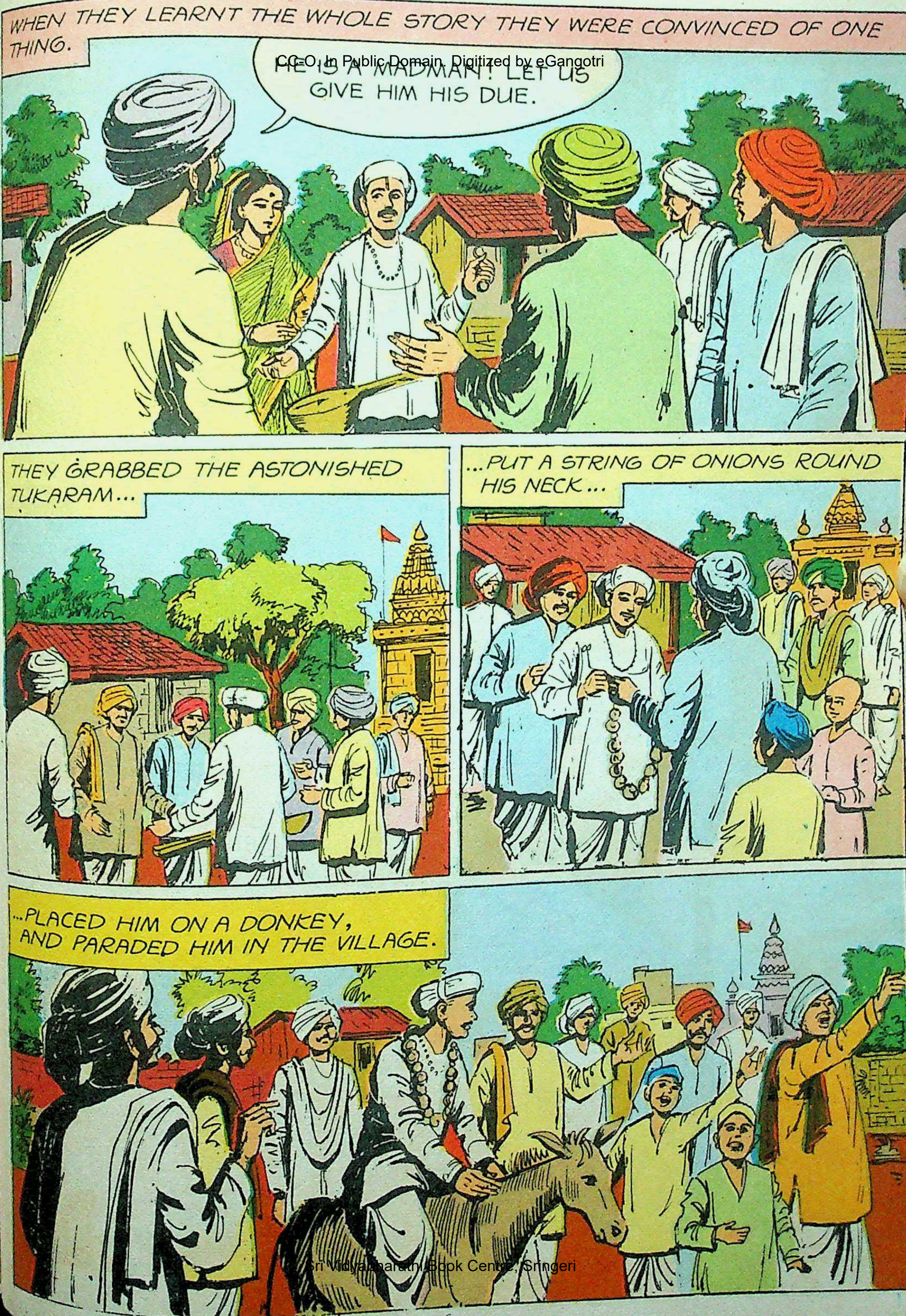

MY LORD, YOU HAVE COME BACK EARLY. HOW MUCH DID YOU MAKE?
COME, LET US GO INDOORS. I SHALL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.

WHEN AVALI HEARD WHAT HE HAD DONE SHE CURSED HIM AND CREATED SUCH A FURORE THAT...

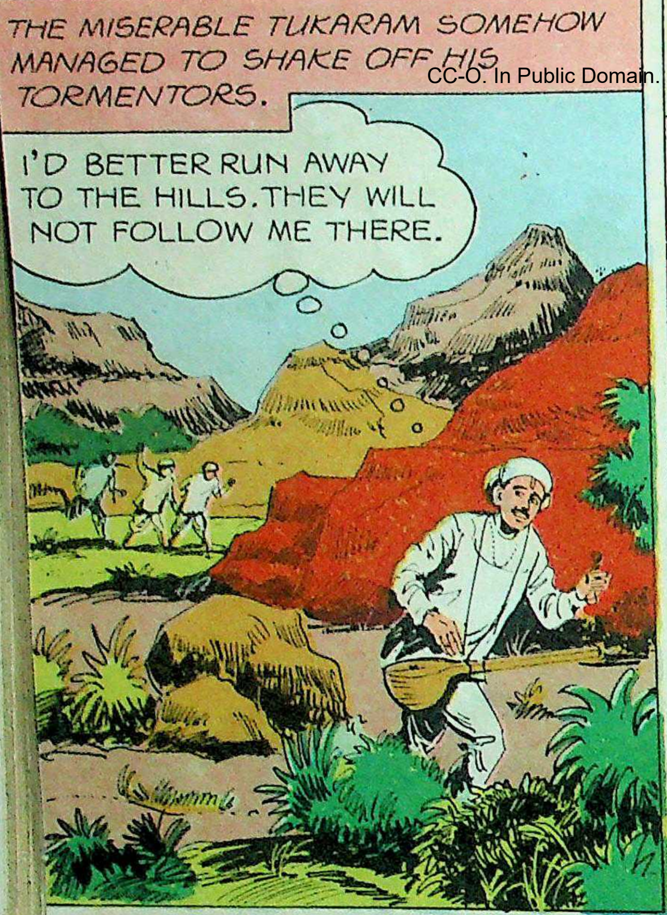


...ALL THE VILLAGERS CAME OUT.

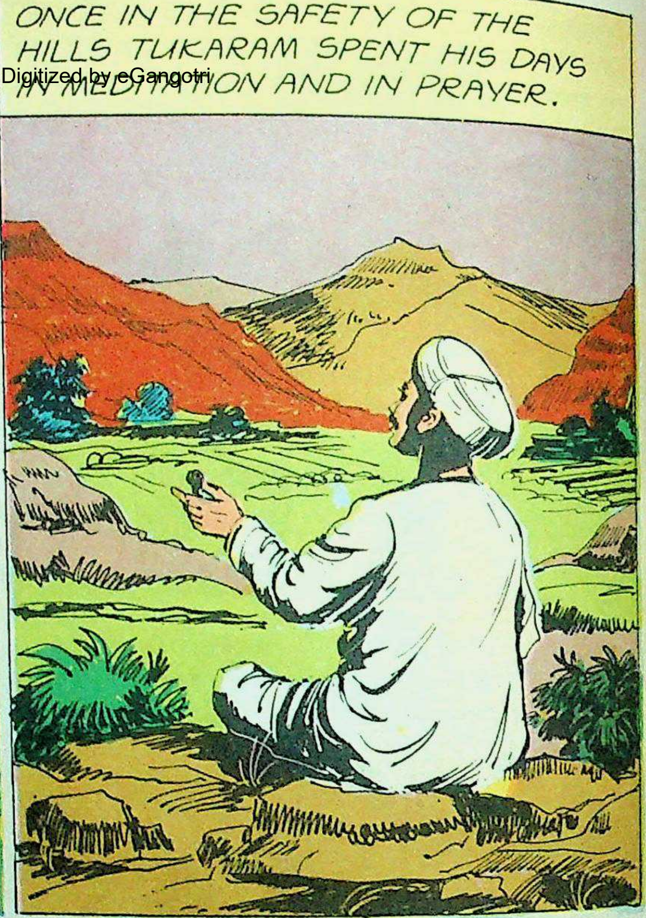

WHAT IS THE MATTER? WHO HAS WRONGED YOU? WE SHALL DEAL WITH HIM.
MY... MY... HUSBAND...


WHEN THEY LEARNT THE WHOLE STORY THEY WERE CONVINCED OF ONE THING.
HE IS A MADMAN! LET US GIVE HIM HIS DUE.
THEY GRABBED THE ASTONISHED TUKARAM...
...PUT A STRING OF ONIONS ROUND HIS NECK...
...PLACED HIM ON A DONKEY, AND PARADED HIM IN THE VILLAGE.

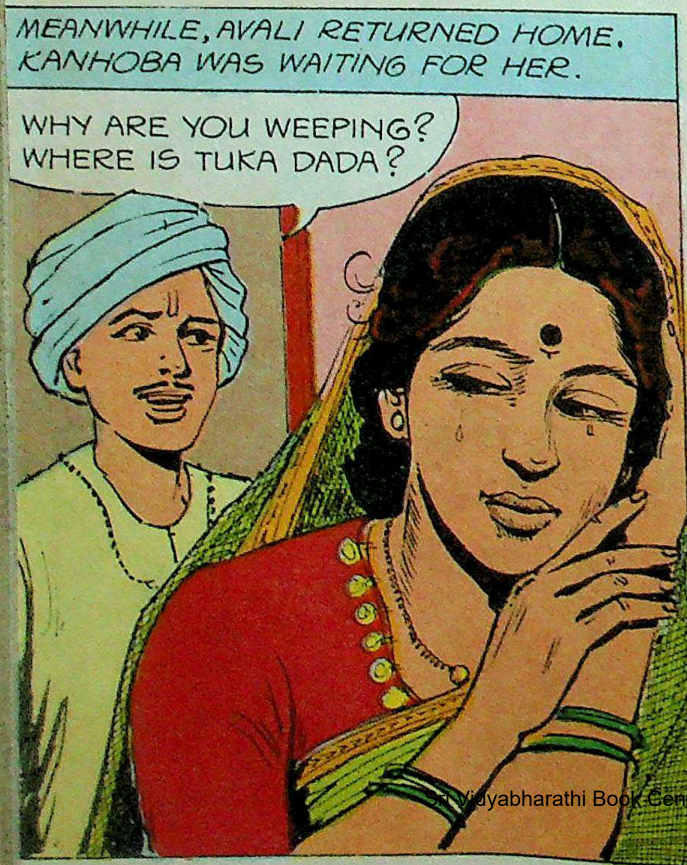
THE MISERABLE TUKARAM SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SHAKE OFF HIS TORMENTORS.


I'D BETTER RUN AWAY TO THE HILLS. THEY WILL NOT FOLLOW ME THERE.

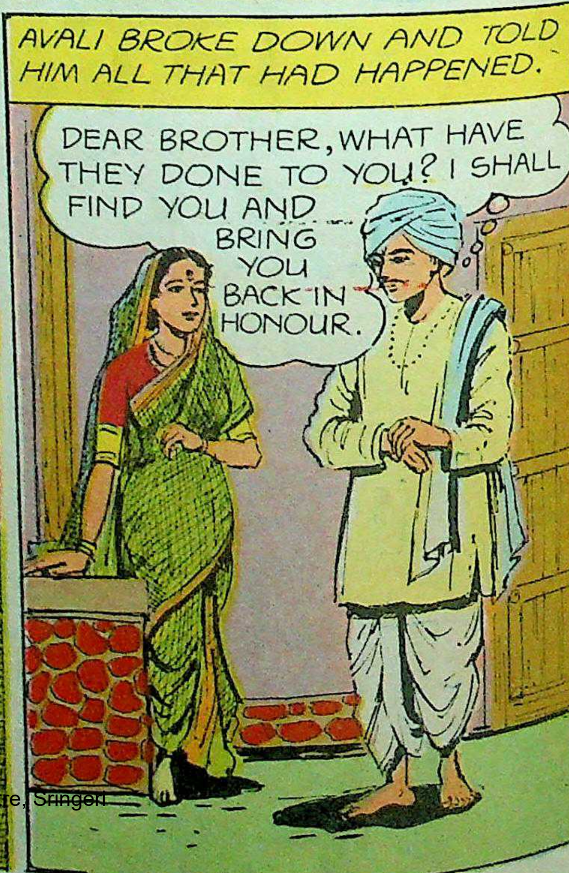
ONCE IN THE SAFETY OF THE HILLS TUKARAM SPENT HIS DAYS IN MEDITATION AND IN PRAYER.

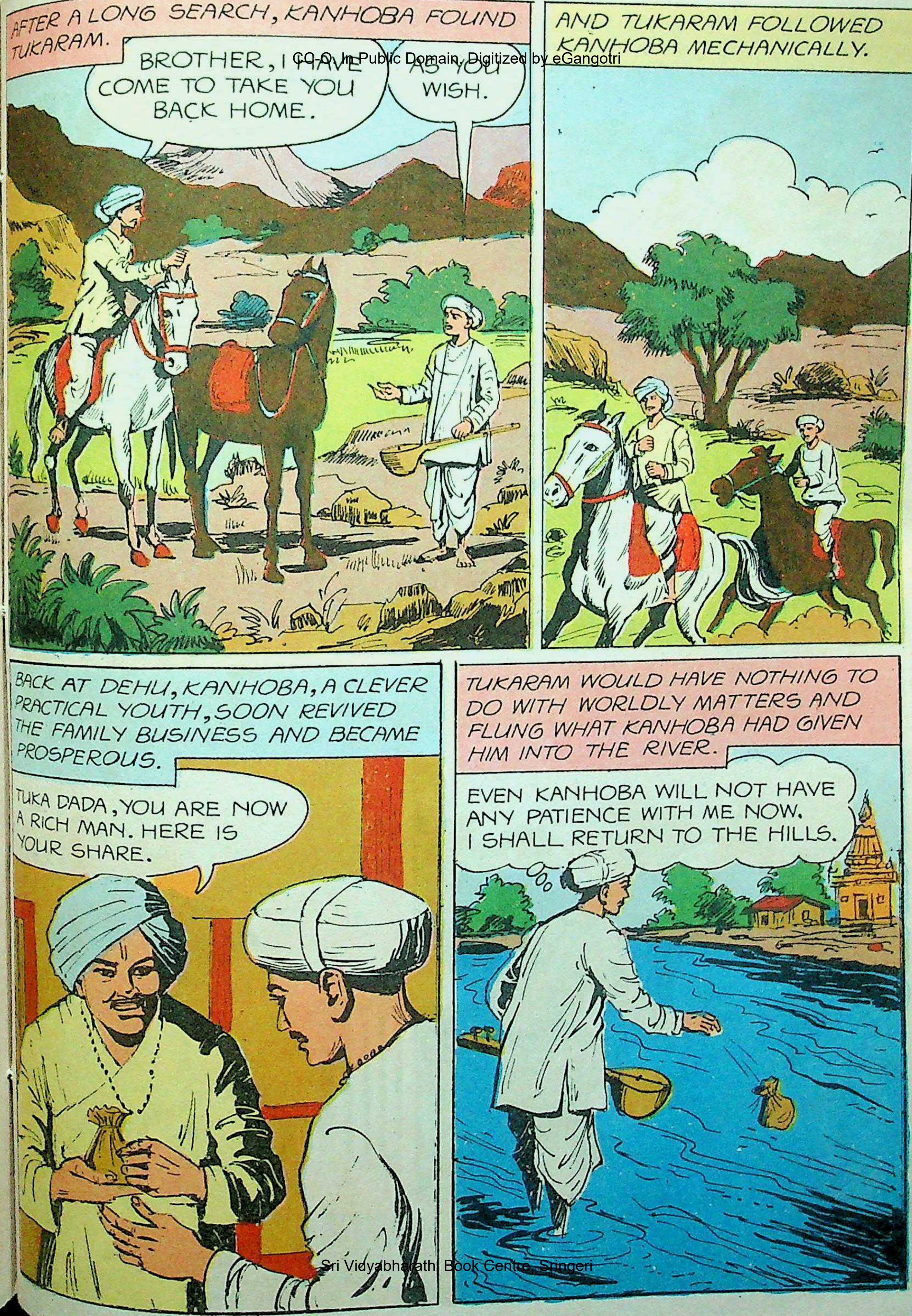


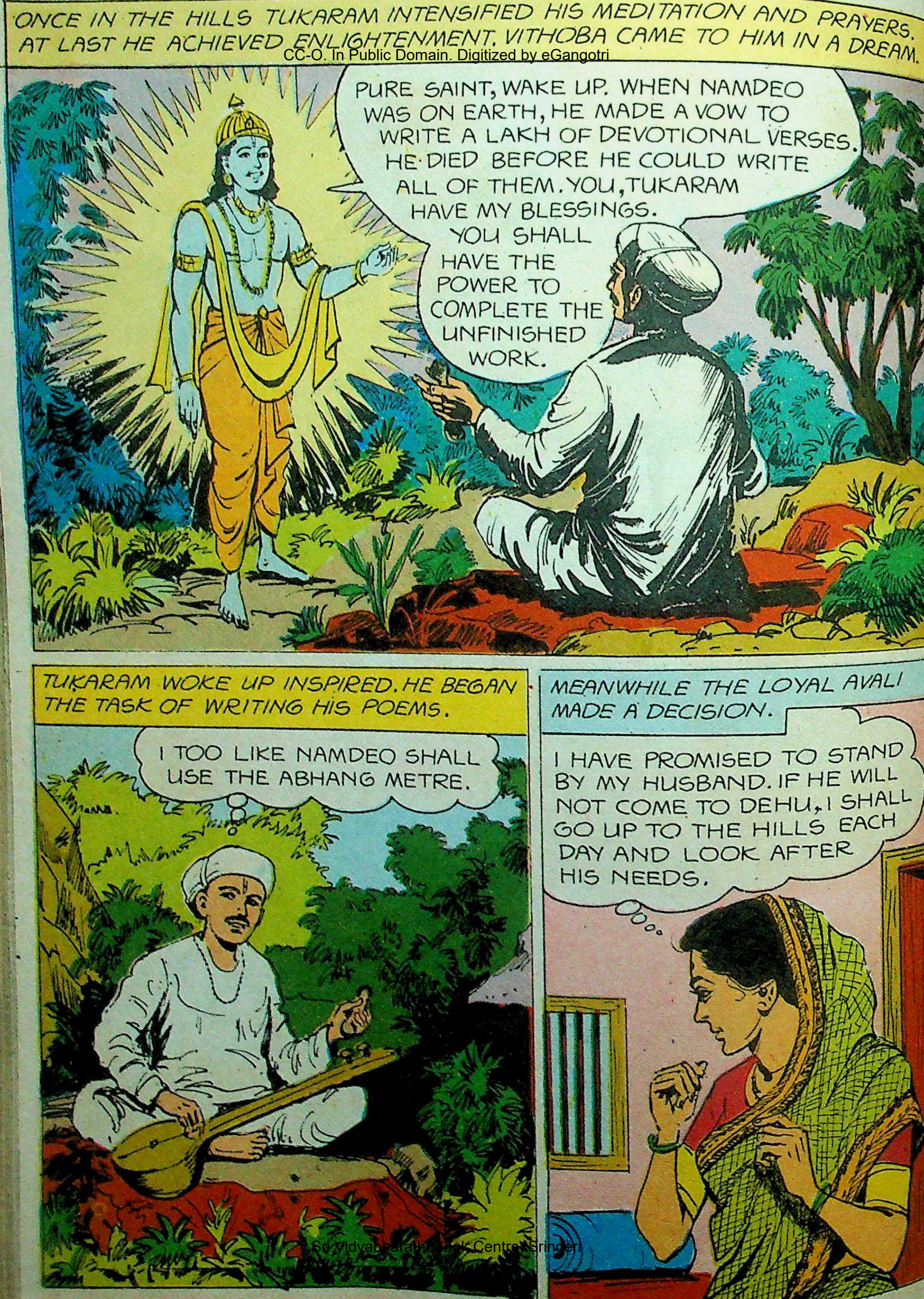
MEANWHILE, AVALI RETURNED HOME. KANHOBA WAS WAITING FOR HER.

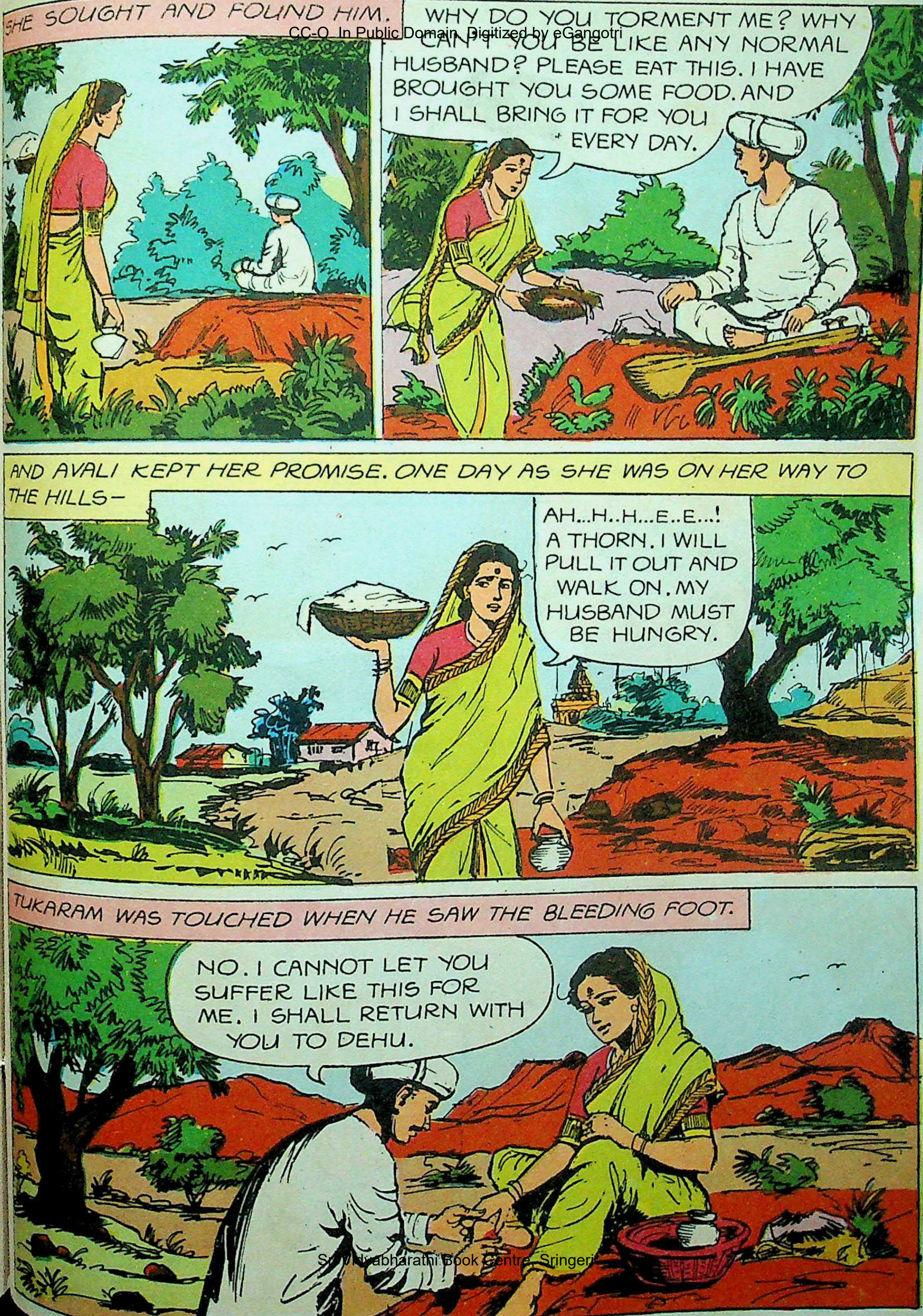

WHY ARE YOU WEEPING? WHERE IS TUKA DADA?

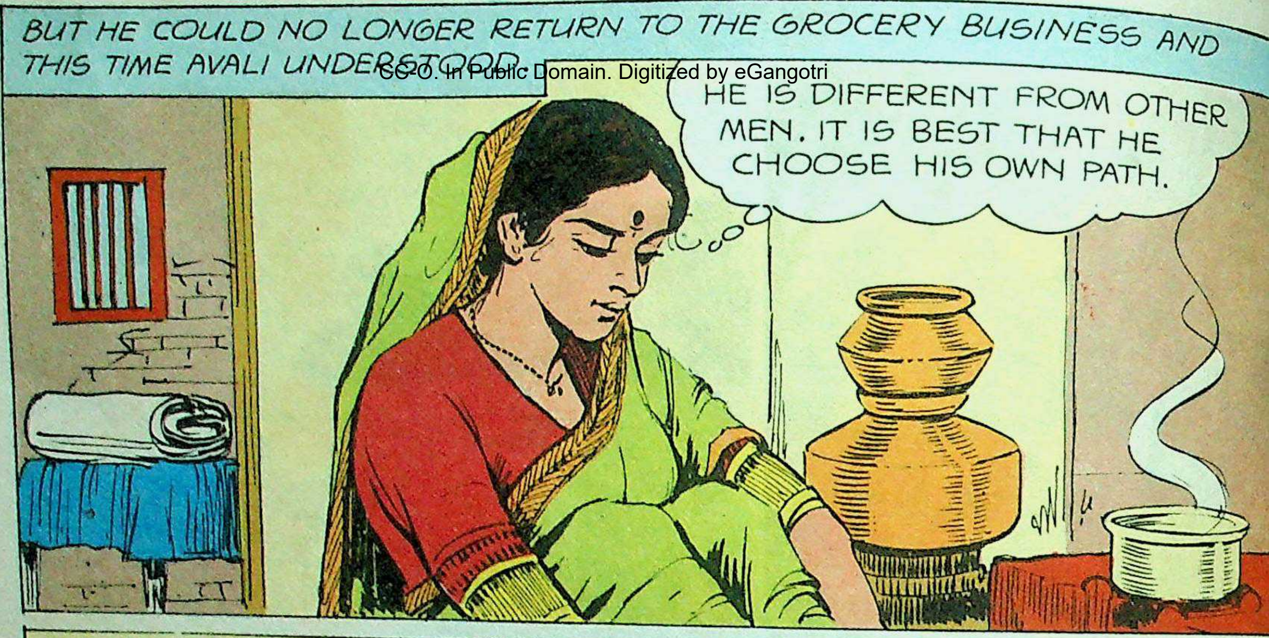
AVALI BROKE DOWN AND TOLD HIM ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.

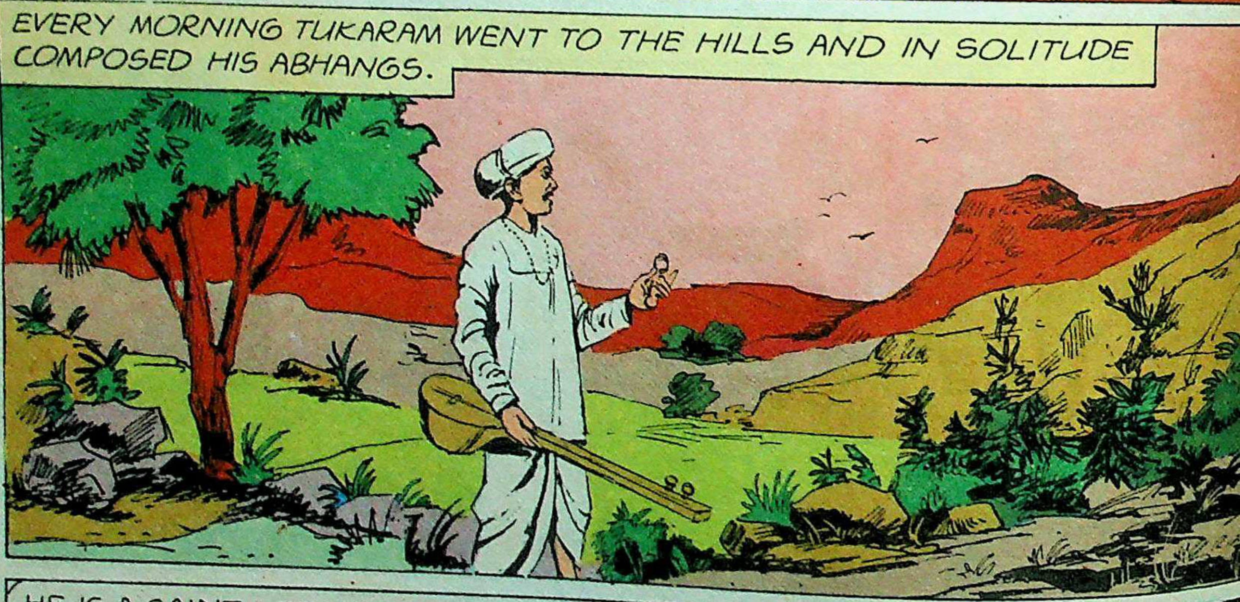

DEAR BROTHER, WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU? I SHALL FIND YOU AND BRING YOU BACK IN HONOUR.

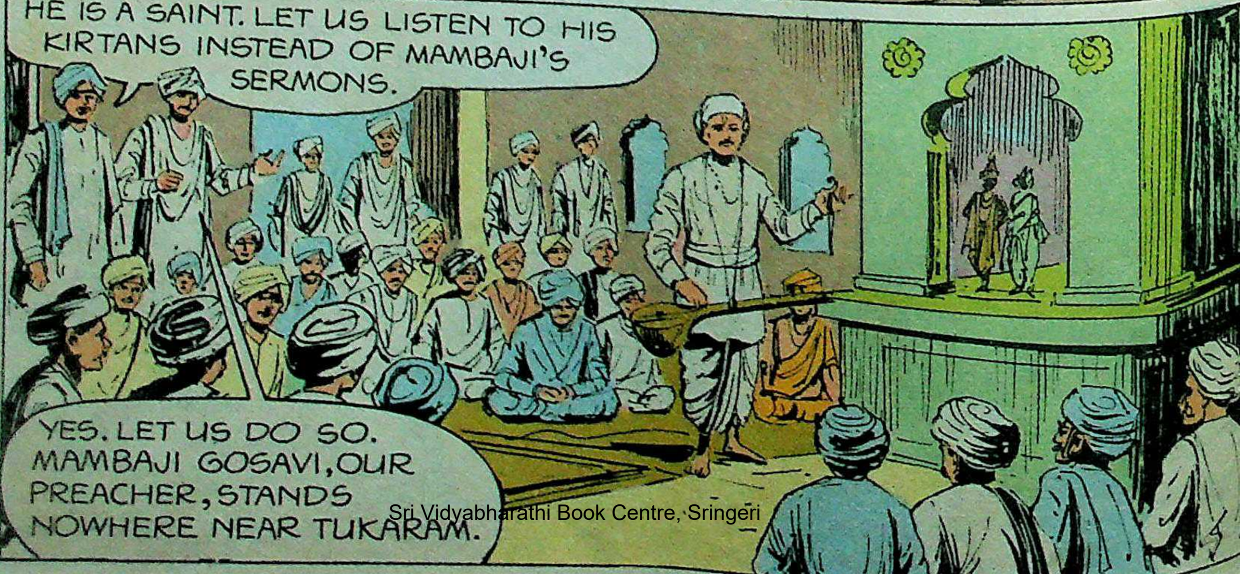

AFTER A LONG SEARCH, KANHOBA FOUND TUKARAM.
BROTHER, I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU BACK HOME.
AS YOU WISH.
AND TUKARAM FOLLOWED KANHOBA MECHANICALLY.
BACK AT DEHU, KANHOBA, A CLEVER PRACTICAL YOUTH, SOON REVIVED THE FAMILY BUSINESS AND BECAME PROSPEROUS.
TUKA DADA, YOU ARE NOW A RICH MAN. HERE IS YOUR SHARE.
TUKARAM WOULD HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH WORLDLY MATTERS AND FLUNG WHAT KANHOBA HAD GIVEN HIM INTO THE RIVER.
EVEN KANHOBA WILL NOT HAVE ANY PATIENCE WITH ME NOW. I SHALL RETURN TO THE HILLS.

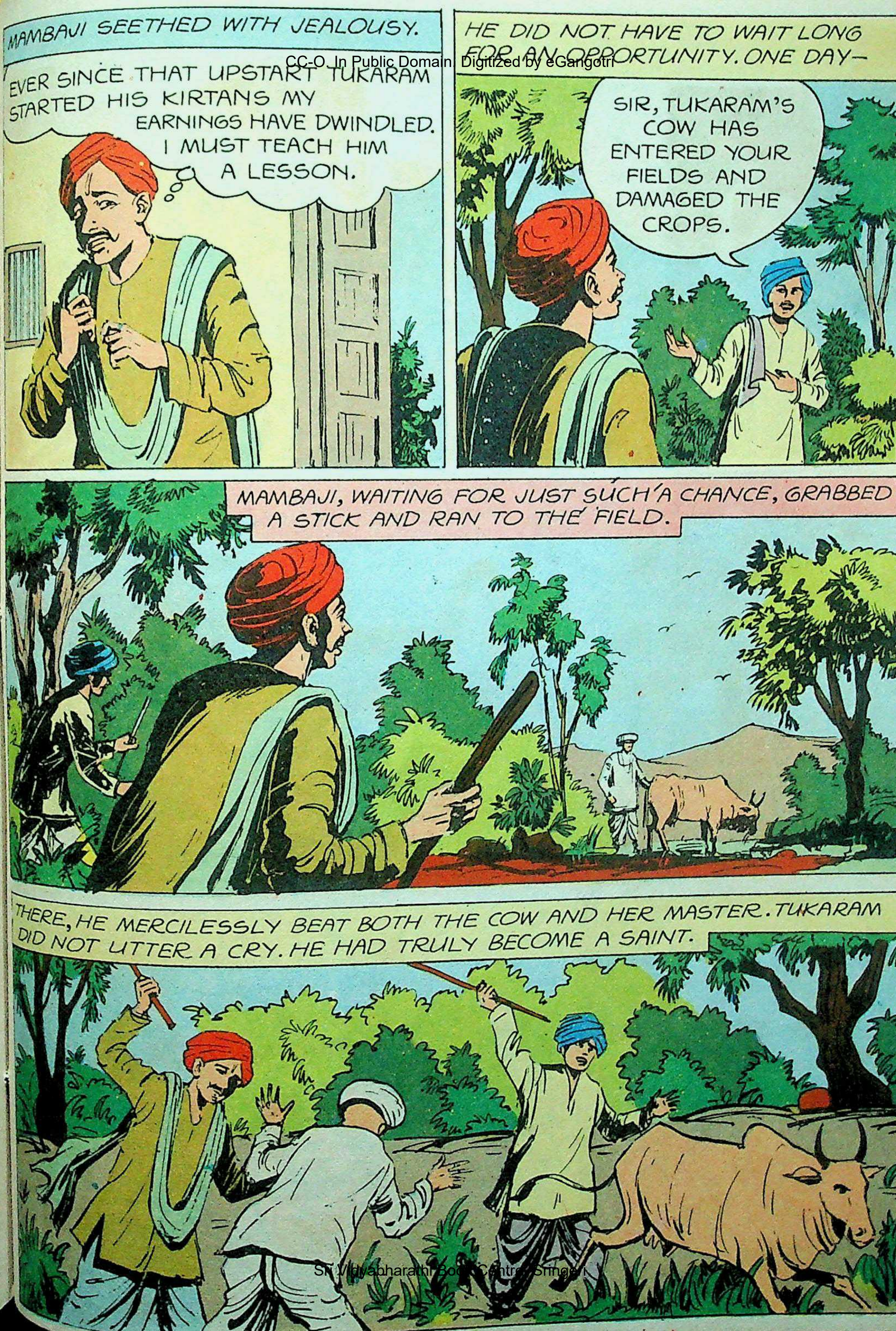

ONCE IN THE HILLS TUKARAM INTENSIFIED HIS MEDITATION AND PRAYERS. AT LAST HE ACHIEVED ENLIGHTENMENT. VITHOBA CAME TO HIM IN A DREAM.
PURE SAINT, WAKE UP. WHEN NAMDEO WAS ON EARTH, HE MADE A VOW TO WRITE A LAKH OF DEVOTIONAL VERSES. HE DIED BEFORE HE COULD WRITE ALL OF THEM. YOU, TUKARAM HAVE MY BLESSINGS. YOU SHALL HAVE THE POWER TO COMPLETE THE UNFINISHED WORK.
TUKARAM WOKE UP INSPIRED. HE BEGAN THE TASK OF WRITING HIS POEMS.
I TOO LIKE NAMDEO SHALL USE THE ABHANG METRE.
MEANWHILE THE LOYAL AVALI MADE A DECISION.
I HAVE PROMISED TO STAND BY MY HUSBAND. IF HE WILL NOT COME TO DEHU, I SHALL GO UP TO THE HILLS EACH DAY AND LOOK AFTER HIS NEEDS.


SHE SOUGHT AND FOUND HIM.
WHY DO YOU TORMENT ME? WHY CAN'T YOU BE LIKE ANY NORMAL HUSBAND? PLEASE EAT THIS. I HAVE BROUGHT YOU SOME FOOD. AND I SHALL BRING IT FOR YOU EVERY DAY.
AND AVALI KEPT HER PROMISE. ONE DAY AS SHE WAS ON HER WAY TO THE HILLS—
AH...H..H...E..E...! A THORN. I WILL PULL IT OUT AND WALK ON. MY HUSBAND MUST BE HUNGRY.
TUKARAM WAS TOUCHED WHEN HE SAW THE BLEEDING FOOT.
NO. I CANNOT LET YOU SUFFER LIKE THIS FOR ME. I SHALL RETURN WITH YOU TO DEHU.

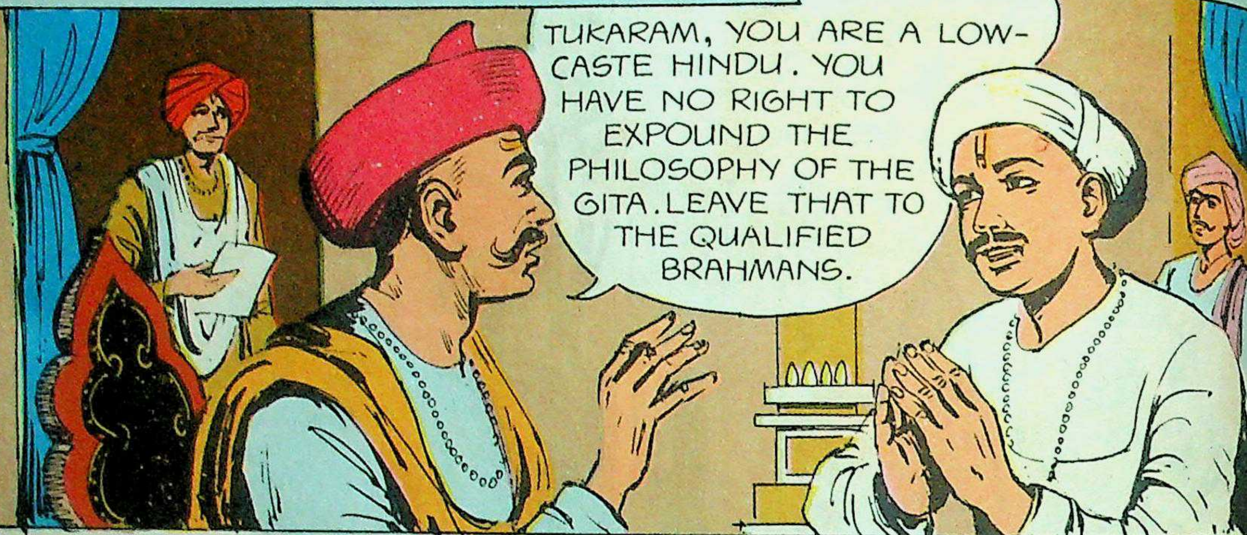

BUT HE COULD NO LONGER RETURN TO THE GROCERY BUSINESS AND THIS TIME AVALI UNDERSTOOD.
HE IS DIFFERENT FROM OTHER MEN. IT IS BEST THAT HE CHOOSE HIS OWN PATH.


EVERY MORNING TUKARAM WENT TO THE HILLS AND IN SOLITUDE COMPOSED HIS ABHANGS.

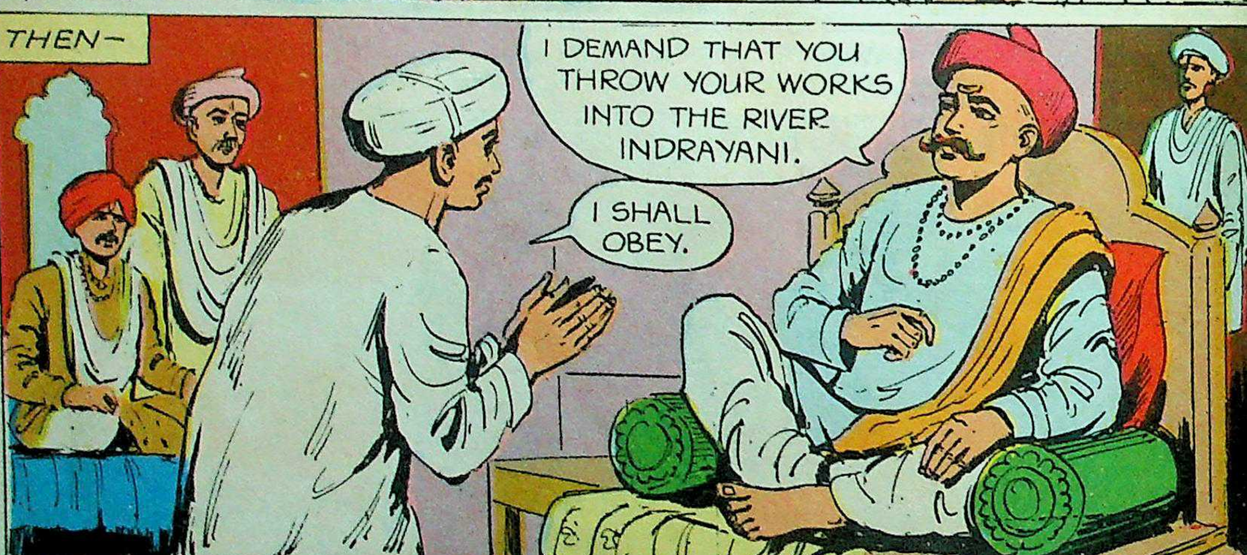

HE IS A SAINT. LET US LISTEN TO HIS KIRTANS INSTEAD OF MAMBAJI'S SERMONS.
YES. LET US DO SO. MAMBAJI GOSAVI, OUR PREACHER, STANDS NOWHERE NEAR TUKARAM.

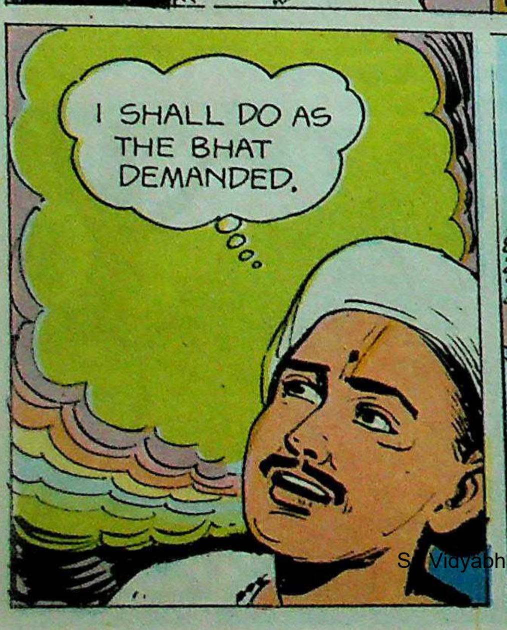

MAMBAJI SEETHED WITH JEALOUSY.
EVER SINCE THAT UPSTART TUKARAM STARTED HIS KIRTANS MY EARNINGS HAVE DWINDLED. I MUST TEACH HIM A LESSON.
HE DID NOT HAVE TO WAIT LONG FOR AN OPPORTUNITY. ONE DAY—
SIR, TUKARAM'S COW HAS ENTERED YOUR FIELDS AND DAMAGED THE CROPS.
MAMBAJI, WAITING FOR JUST SUCH A CHANCE, GRABBED A STICK AND RAN TO THE FIELD.
THERE, HE MERCILESSLY BEAT BOTH THE COW AND HER MASTER. TUKARAM DID NOT UTTER A CRY. HE HAD TRULY BECOME A SAINT.

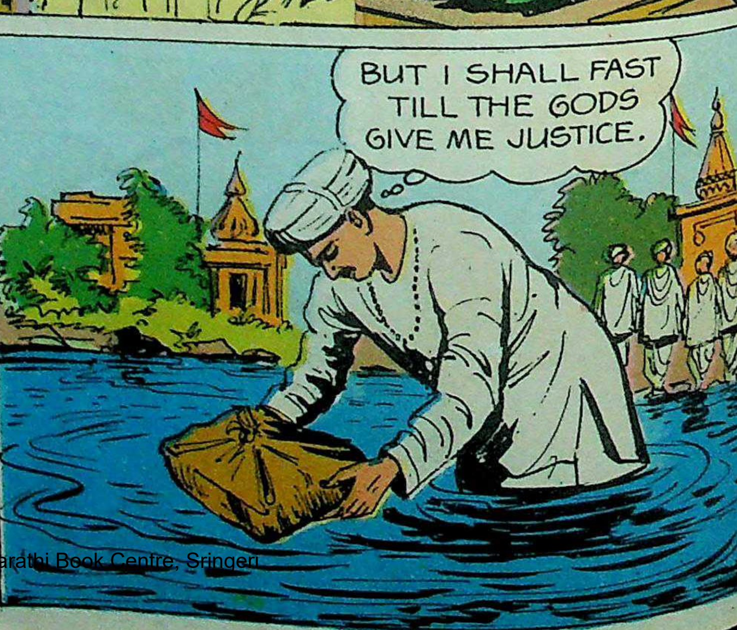
BUT MAMBAJI WAS NOT HIS ONLY ENEMY. ONE DAY RAMESHWAR BHAT, AN ORTHODOX HINDU SCHOLAR, CAME TO HIM.

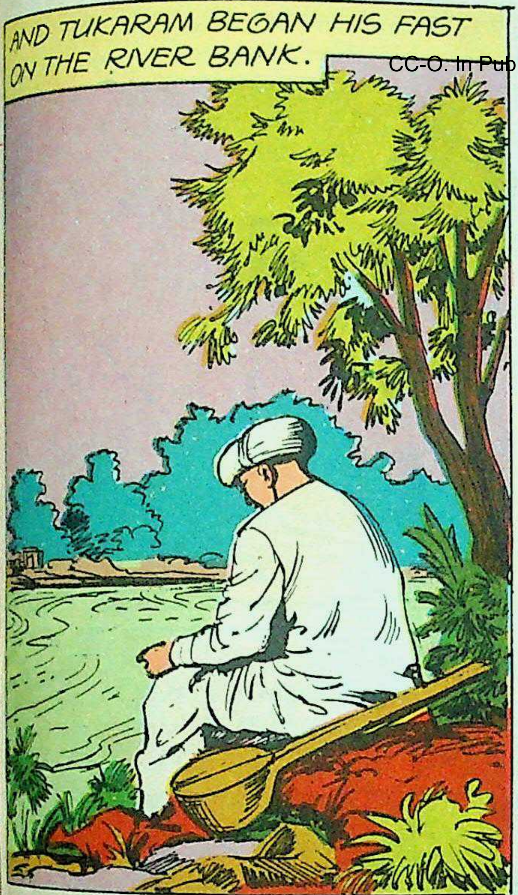

TUKARAM, YOU ARE A LOW-CASTE HINDU. YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO EXPOUND THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE GITA. LEAVE THAT TO THE QUALIFIED BRAHMANS.

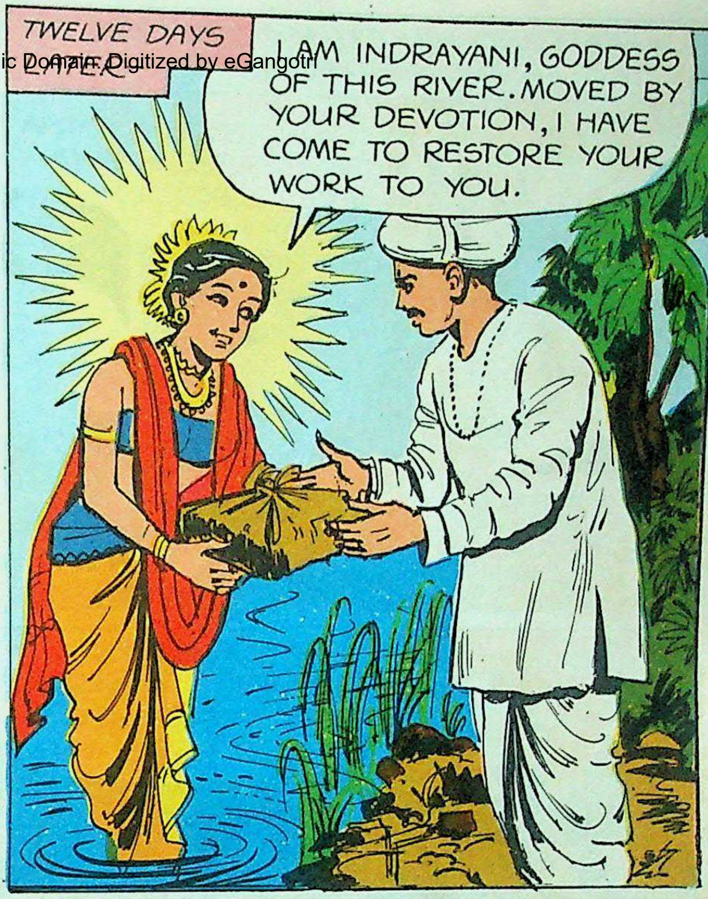
THEN—

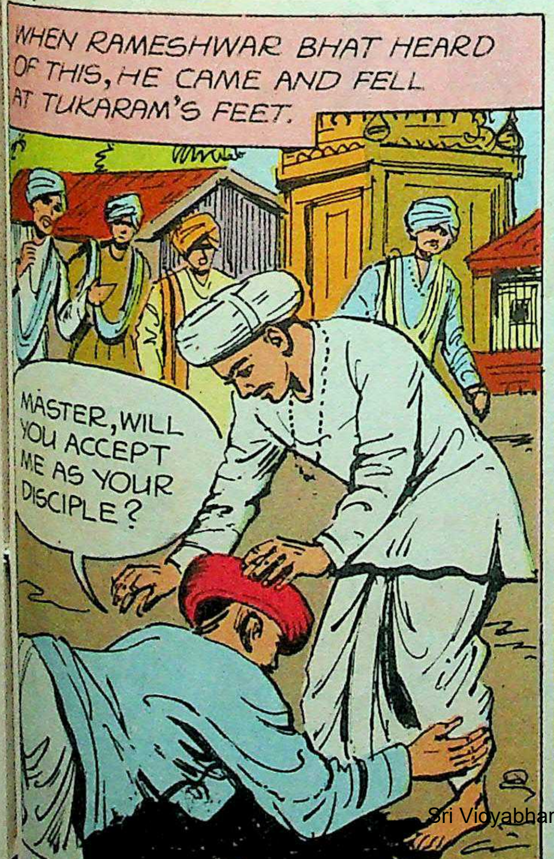

I DEMAND THAT YOU THROW YOUR WORKS INTO THE RIVER INDRAYANI.
I SHALL OBEY.

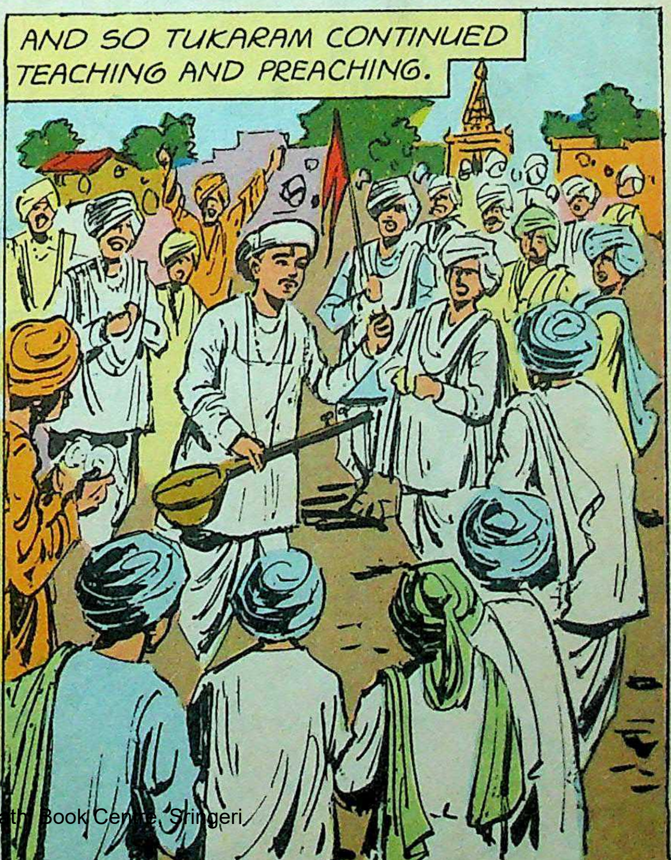

I SHALL DO AS THE BHAT DEMANDED.


BUT I SHALL FAST TILL THE GODS GIVE ME JUSTICE.


AND TUKARAM BEGAN HIS FAST ON THE RIVER BANK.


TWELVE DAYS LATER
I AM INDRAYANI, GODDESS OF THIS RIVER. MOVED BY YOUR DEVOTION, I HAVE COME TO RESTORE YOUR WORK TO YOU.


WHEN RAMESHWAR BHAT HEARD OF THIS, HE CAME AND FELL AT TUKARAM'S FEET.
MASTER, WILL YOU ACCEPT ME AS YOUR DISCIPLE?


AND SO TUKARAM CONTINUED TEACHING AND PREACHING.

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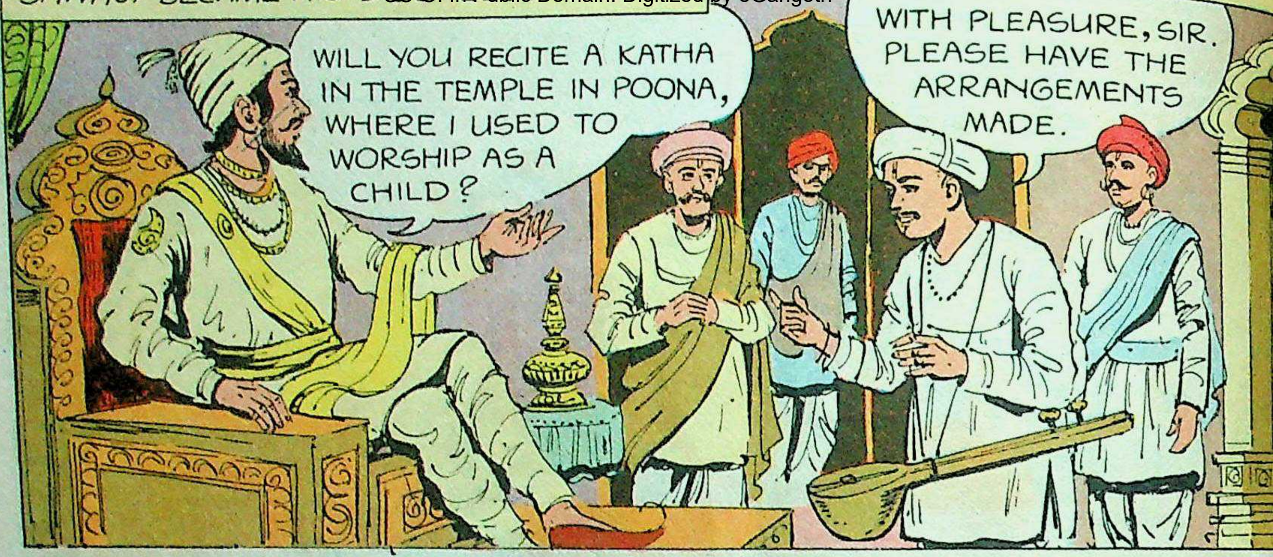
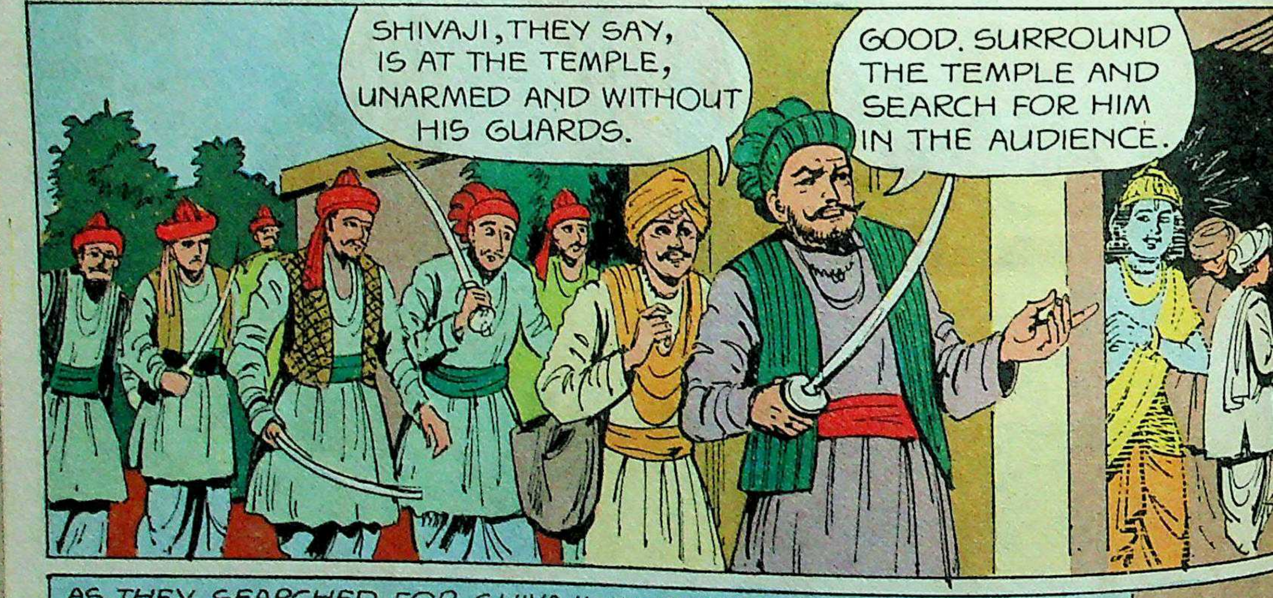
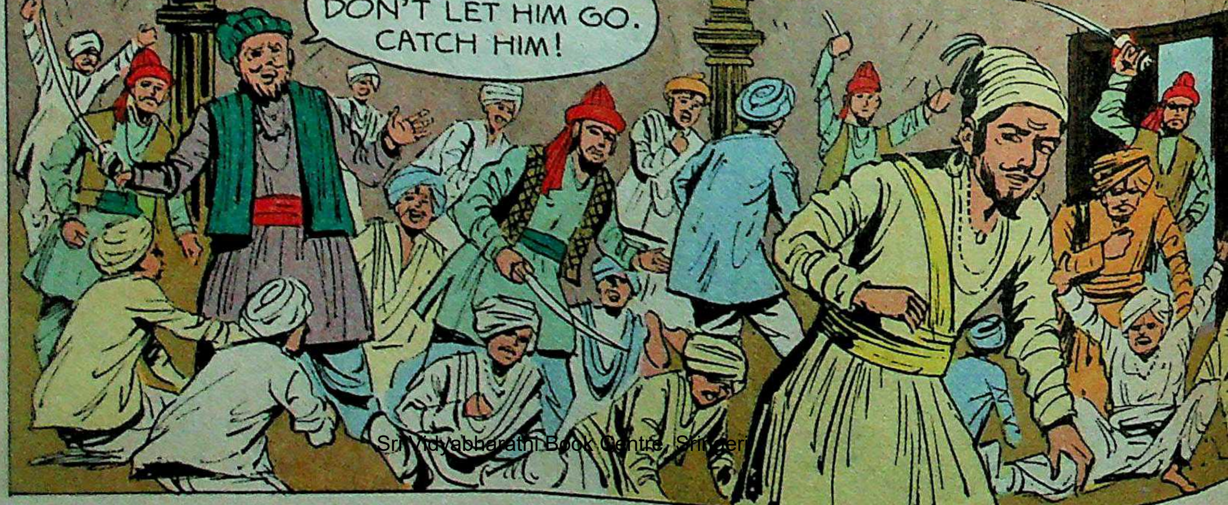
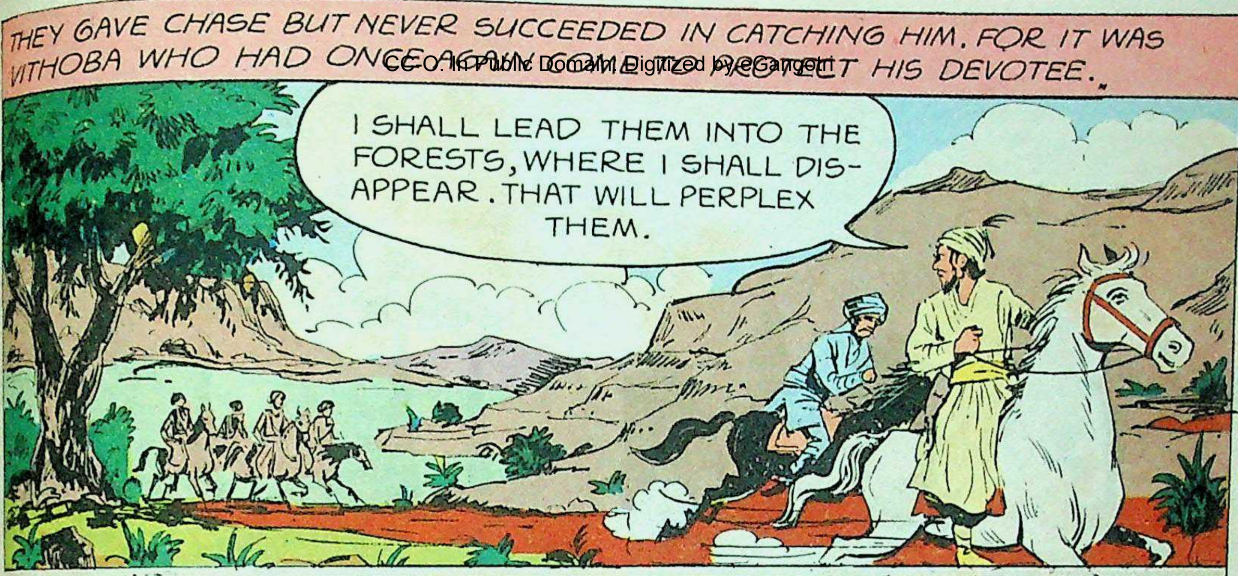
TUKARAM AND HIS ABHANGS BECAME SO FAMOUS THAT EVEN THE GREAT SHIVAJI BECAME HIS DISCIPLE. ONE DAY–

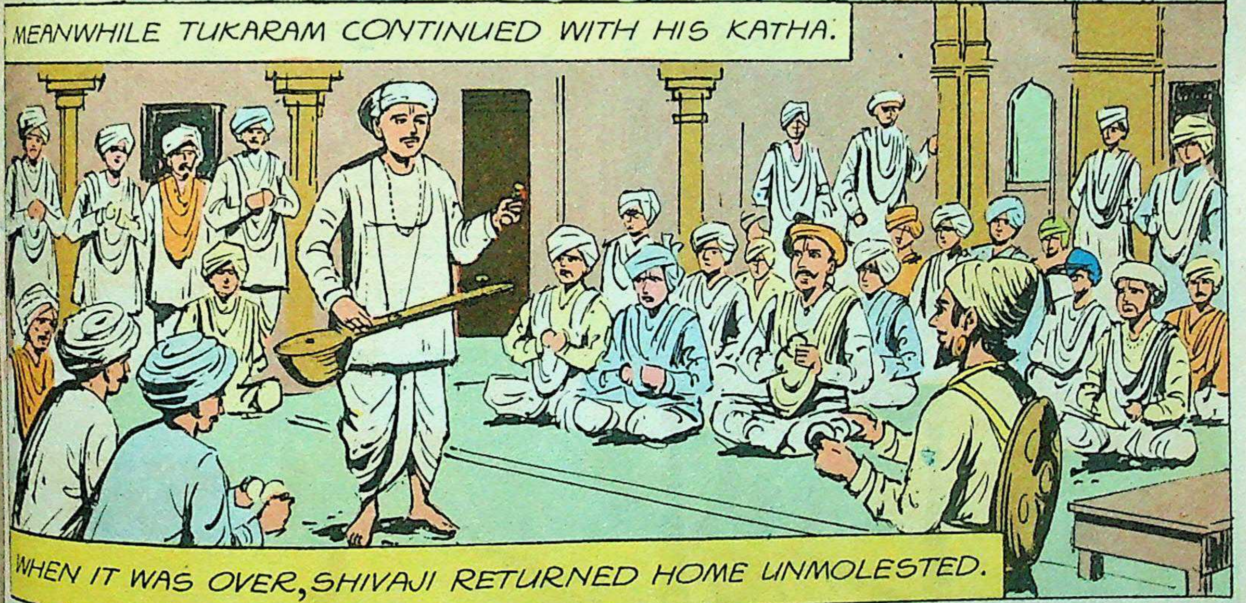

WILL YOU RECITE A KATHA IN THE TEMPLE IN POONA, WHERE I USED TO WORSHIP AS A CHILD?
WITH PLEASURE, SIR. PLEASE HAVE THE ARRANGEMENTS MADE.

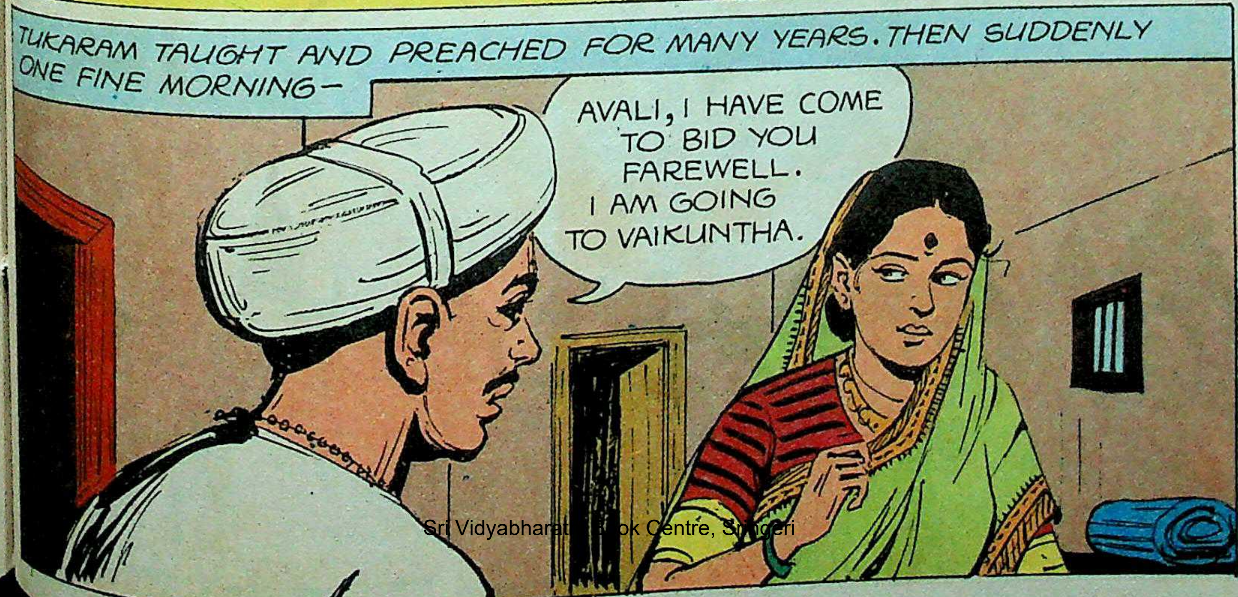

SHIVAJI, THEY SAY, IS AT THE TEMPLE, UNARMED AND WITHOUT HIS GUARDS.
GOOD. SURROUND THE TEMPLE AND SEARCH FOR HIM IN THE AUDIENCE.

AS THEY SEARCHED FOR SHIVAJI, IN THE AUDIENCE, SUDDENLY–


DON'T LET HIM GO. CATCH HIM!


THEY GAVE CHASE BUT NEVER SUCCEEDED IN CATCHING HIM. FOR IT WAS VITHOBA WHO HAD ONCE AGAIN COME TO PROTECT HIS DEVOTEE.
I SHALL LEAD THEM INTO THE FORESTS, WHERE I SHALL DISAPPEAR. THAT WILL PERPLEX THEM.


MEANWHILE TUKARAM CONTINUED WITH HIS KATHA.
WHEN IT WAS OVER, SHIVAJI RETURNED HOME UNMOLESTED.


TUKARAM TAUGHT AND PREACHED FOR MANY YEARS. THEN SUDDENLY ONE FINE MORNING—
AVALI, I HAVE COME TO BID YOU FAREWELL. I AM GOING TO VAIKUNTHA.

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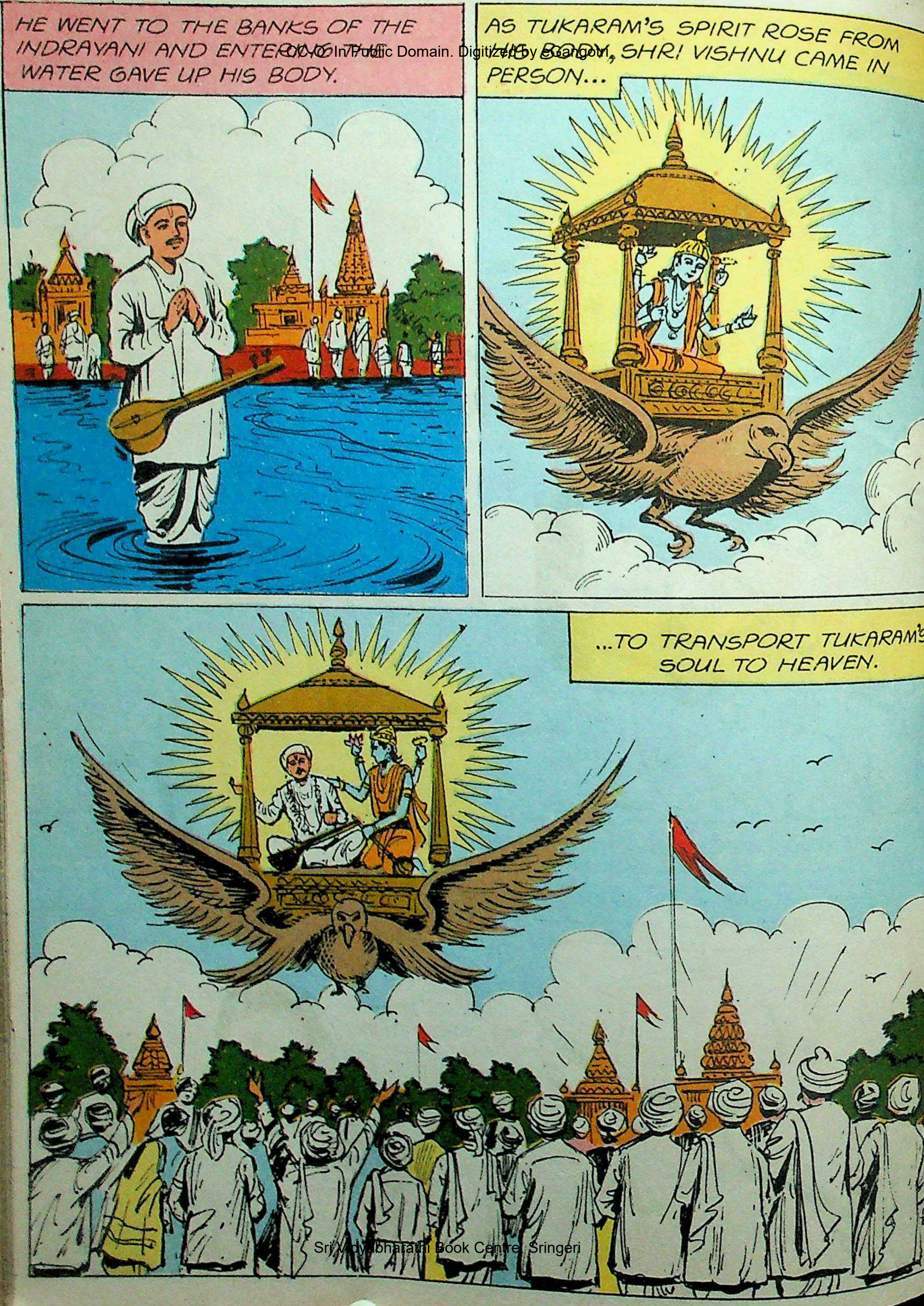
HE WENT TO THE BANKS OF THE INDRAYANI AND ENTERING THE WATER GAVE UP HIS BODY.
AS TUKARAM'S SPIRIT ROSE FROM HIS BODY, SHRI VISHNU CAME IN PERSON...
...TO TRANSPORT TUKARAM'S SOUL TO HEAVEN.

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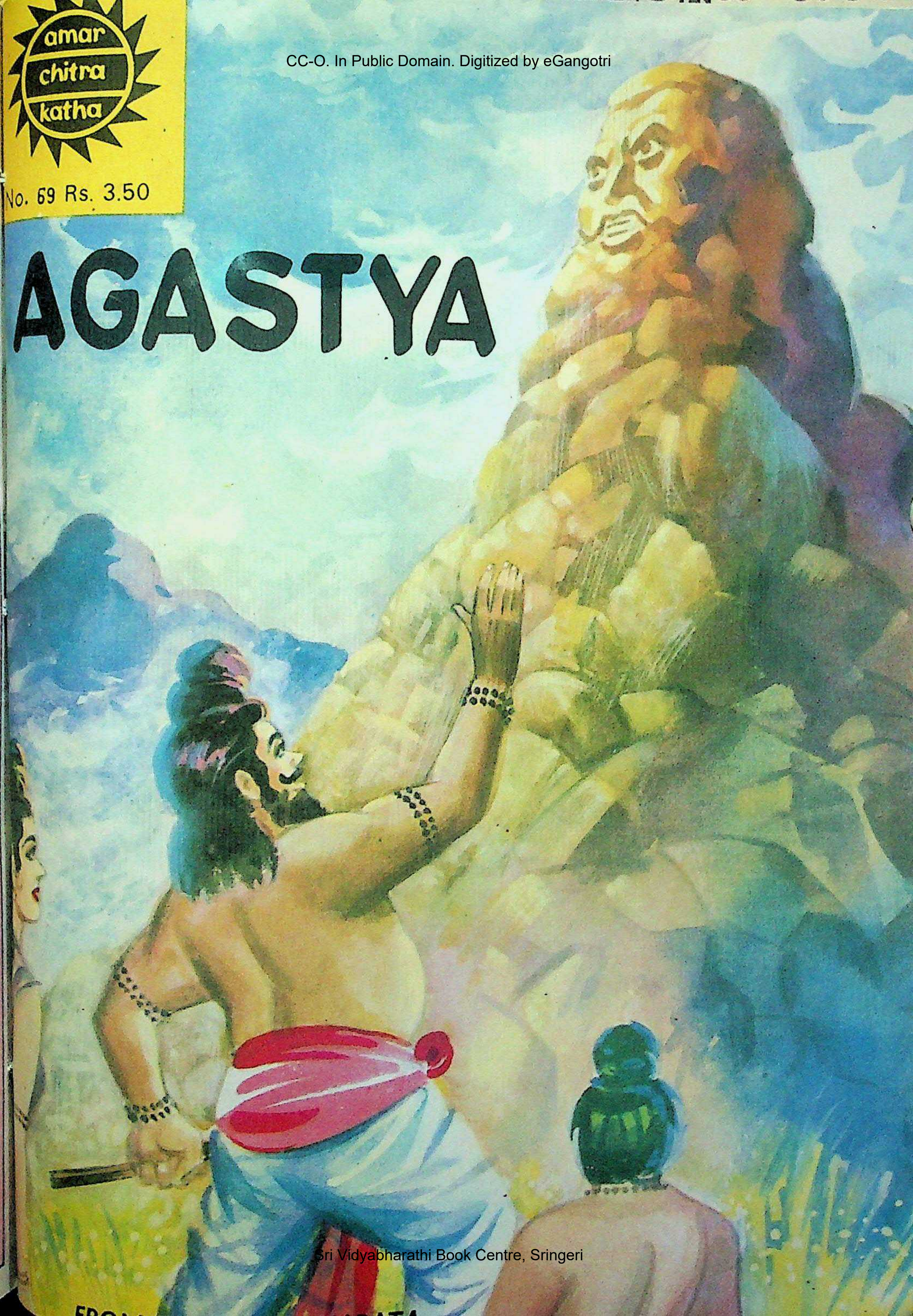
AGASTYA



Agastya is perhaps the most famous of the Rishis of India. His exploits are as well-known in the South of India as in the North. Agastya, besides, is a familiar figure in South-East Asian mythology, too.

Scattered over the *Vedas*, the *Brahmanas* and the *Puranas*, the references to Agastya are far too numerous to be coherent. Yet there are some points where the diverse accounts seem to converge. For instance there is general agreement that he was born in a jar, which gave him the name Kumbha - Sambhava ; that his wife was Lopamudra ; that he often acted as the friend, guide and philosopher to Indra ; that though almost a dwarf in size he had disciplined himself to achieve incredible feats of strength, and last but not least, he had had close links with the land to the south of the Vindhya mountains.

Parallels to the stories in Sanskrit are popular in Tamil. Some scholars identify Agastya as the author of the hoary Tamil treatise, "AKATTIYAM" and as the teacher of the author of "TOLKAPPIYAM", the oldest extant work on linguistics in Tamil.

Whatever may be the verdict on these disputed details, Agastya's role in the cultural integration of our country appears to have been important and significant,

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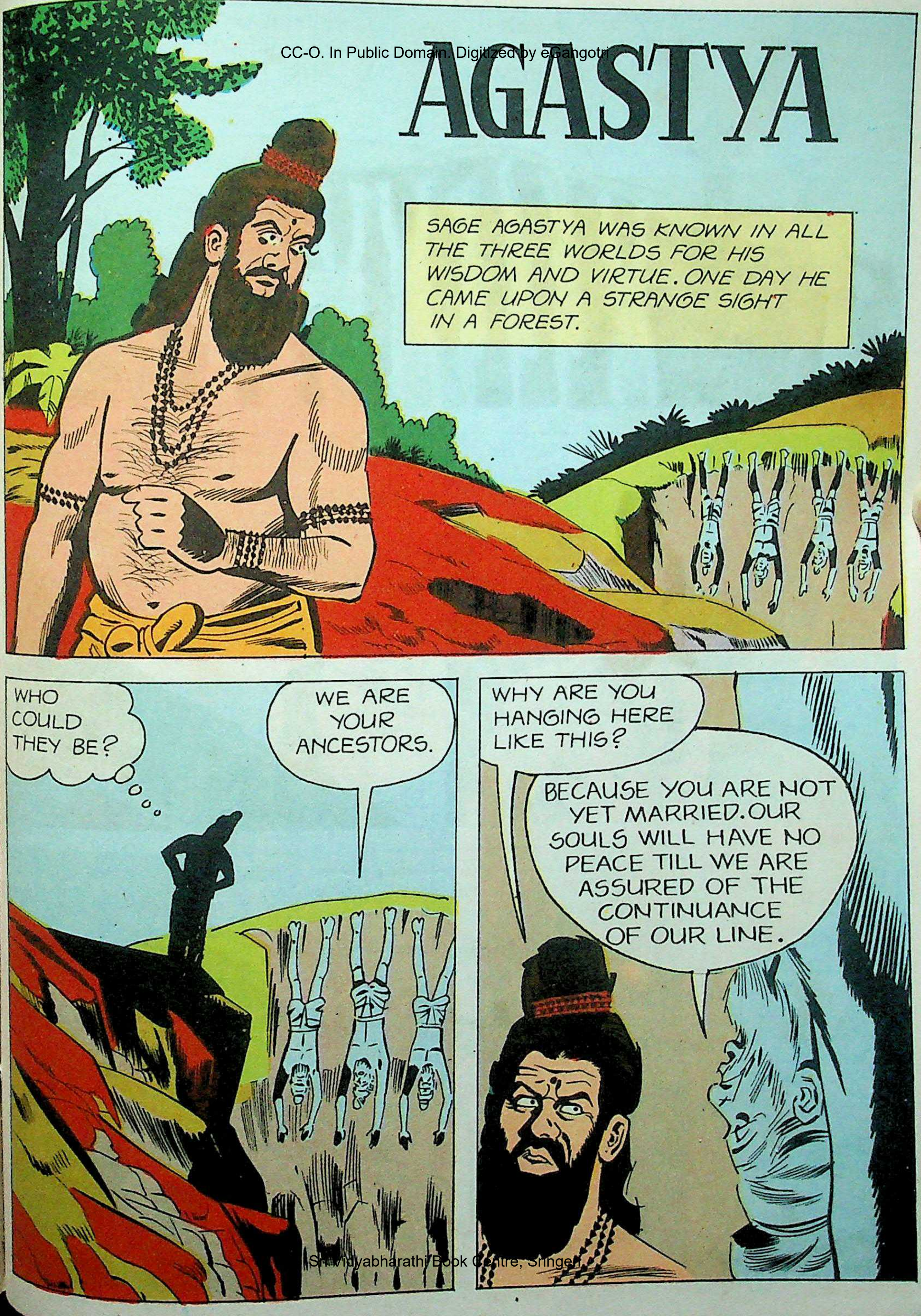
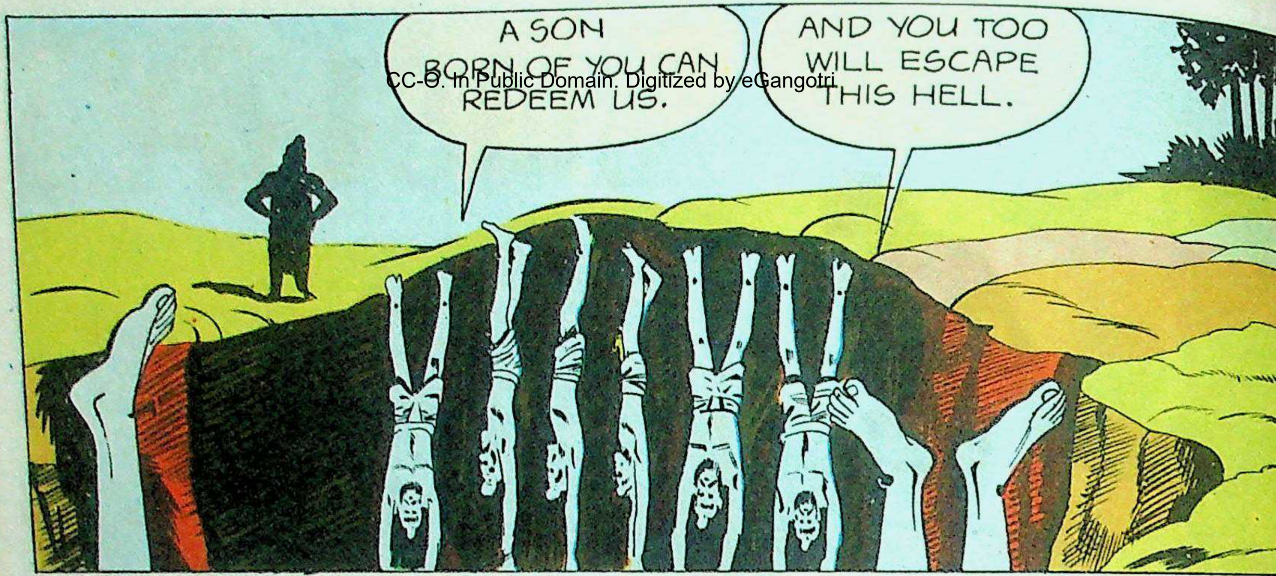
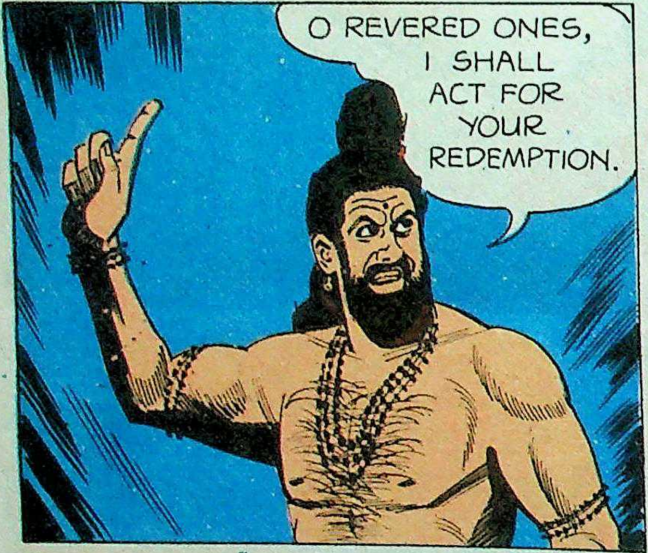
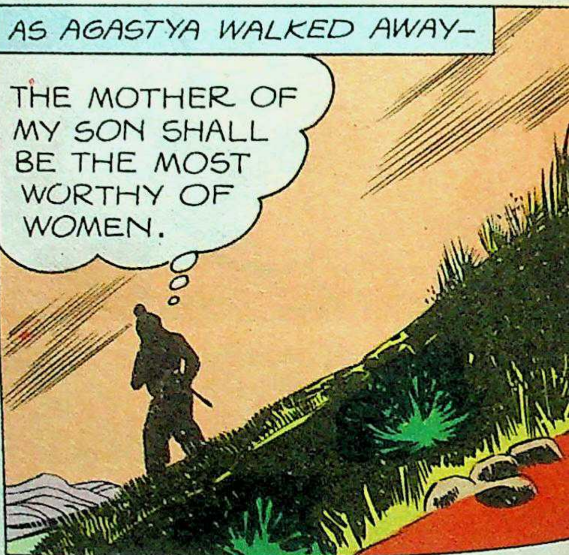
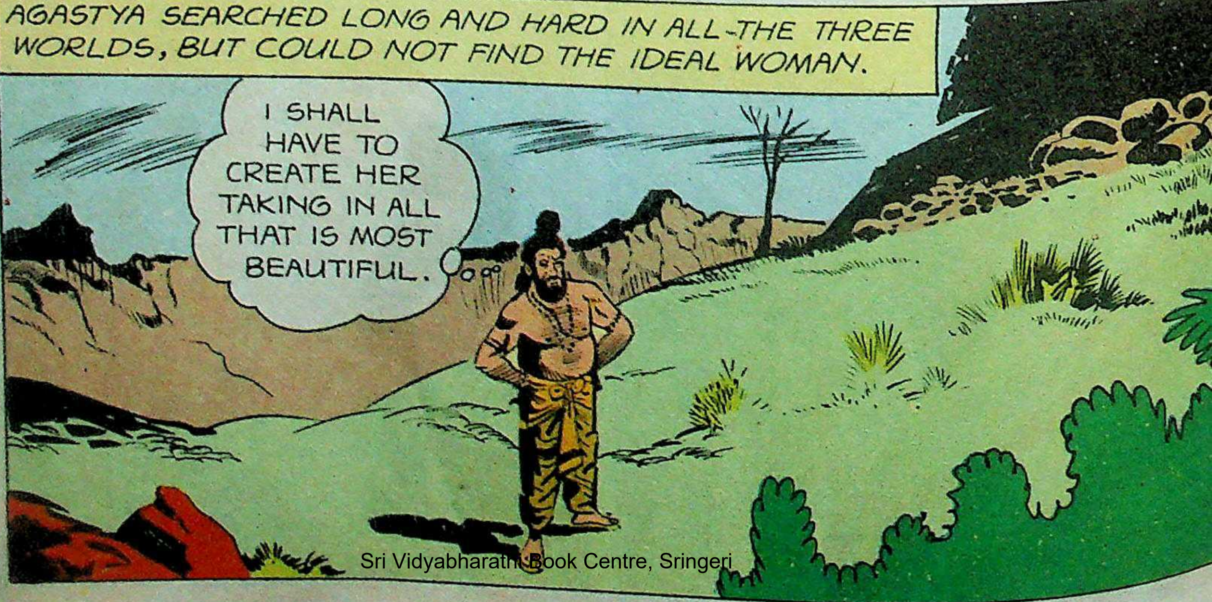
AGASTYA

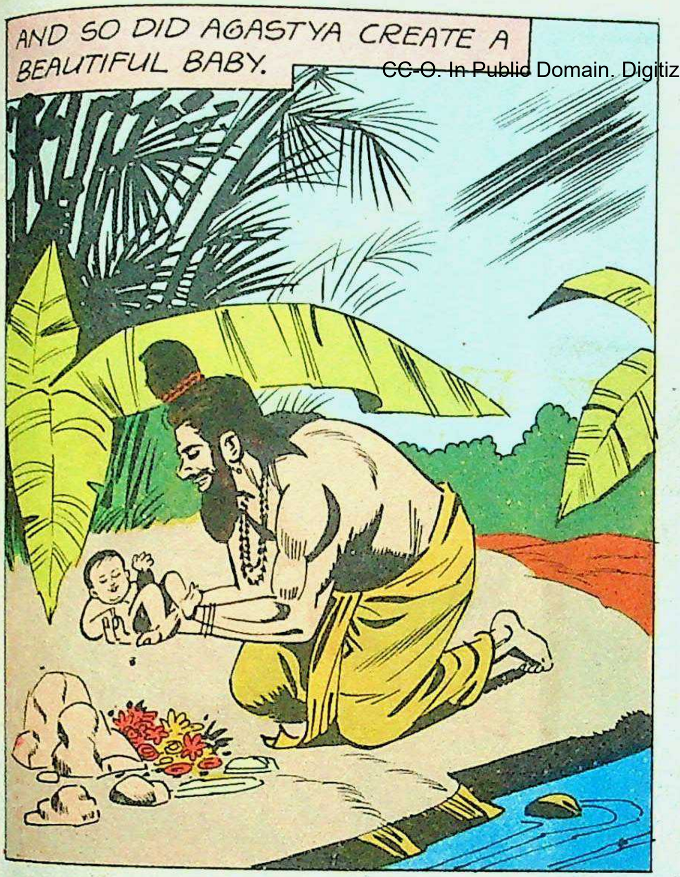

SAGE AGASTYA WAS KNOWN IN ALL THE THREE WORLDS FOR HIS WISDOM AND VIRTUE. ONE DAY HE CAME UPON A STRANGE SIGHT IN A FOREST.
WHO COULD THEY BE?
WE ARE YOUR ANCESTORS.
WHY ARE YOU HANGING HERE LIKE THIS?
BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT YET MARRIED. OUR SOULS WILL HAVE NO PEACE TILL WE ARE ASSURED OF THE CONTINUANCE OF OUR LINE.

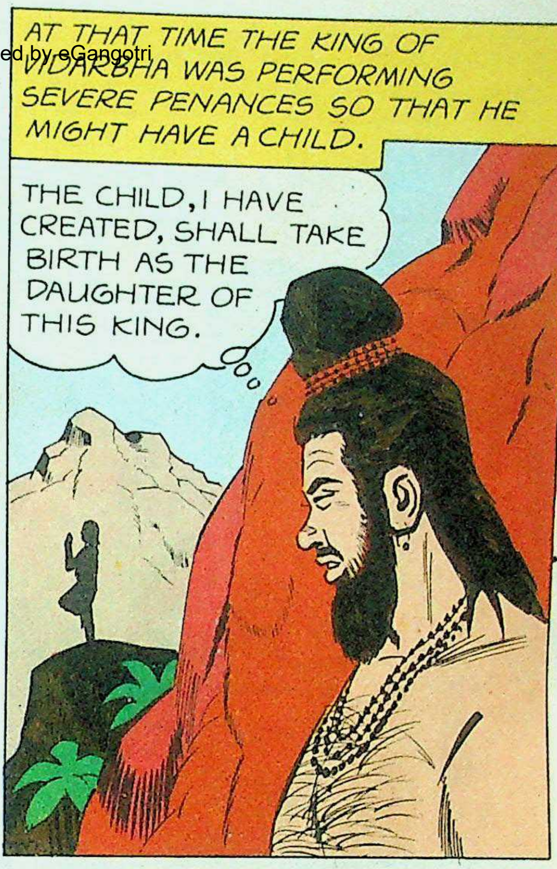

A SON BORN OF YOU CAN REDEEM US.
AND YOU TOO WILL ESCAPE THIS HELL.

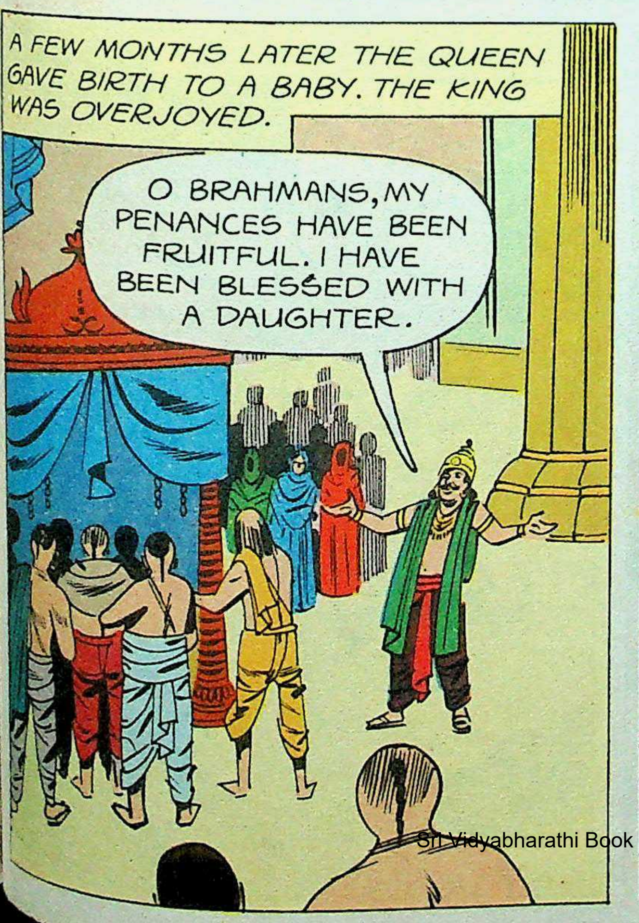

O REVERED ONES, I SHALL ACT FOR YOUR REDEMPTION.

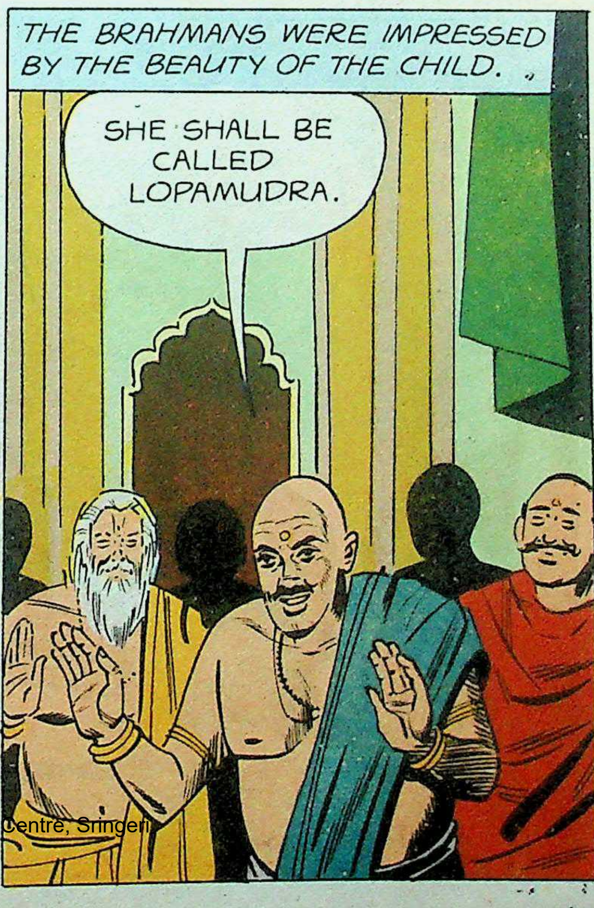

AS AGASTYA WALKED AWAY–
THE MOTHER OF MY SON SHALL BE THE MOST WORTHY OF WOMEN.

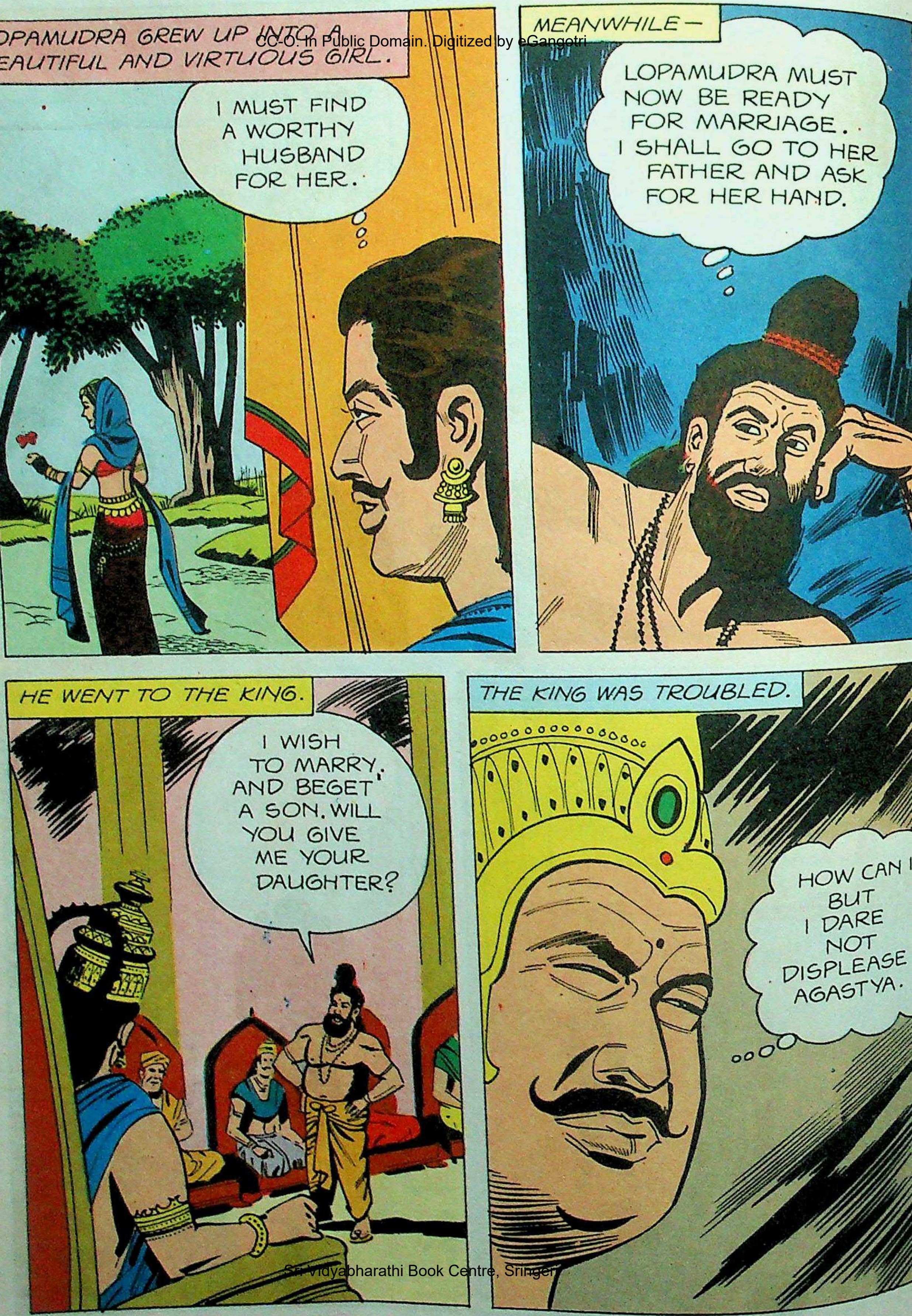

AGASTYA SEARCHED LONG AND HARD IN ALL THE THREE WORLDS, BUT COULD NOT FIND THE IDEAL WOMAN.
I SHALL HAVE TO CREATE HER TAKING IN ALL THAT IS MOST BEAUTIFUL.

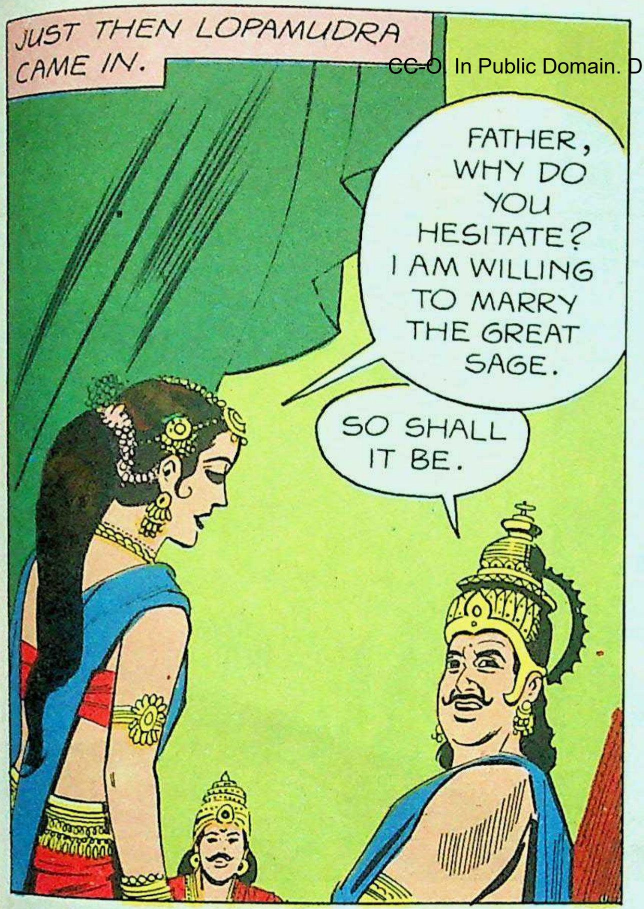

AND SO DID AGASTYA CREATE A BEAUTIFUL BABY.

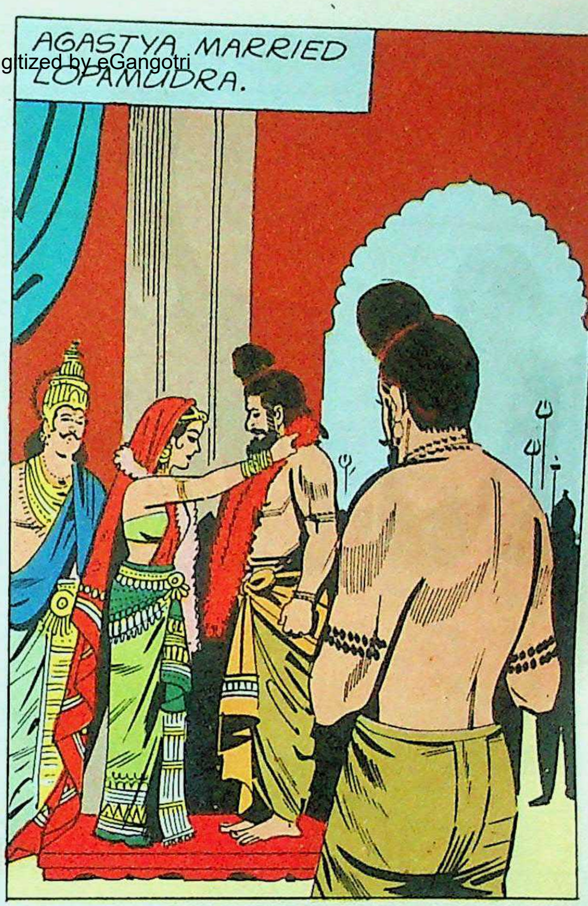

AT THAT TIME THE KING OF VIDARBHA WAS PERFORMING SEVERE PENANCES SO THAT HE MIGHT HAVE A CHILD.
THE CHILD, I HAVE CREATED, SHALL TAKE BIRTH AS THE DAUGHTER OF THIS KING.

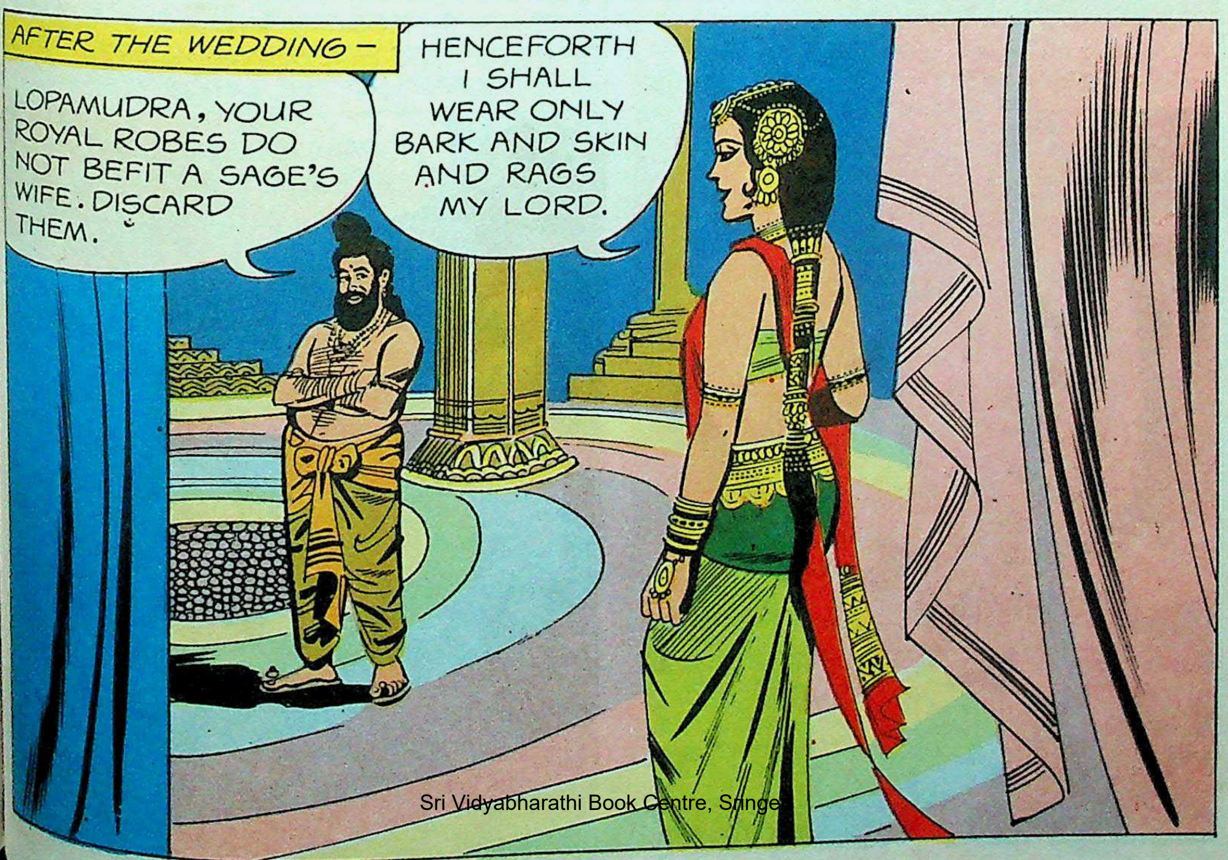

A FEW MONTHS LATER THE QUEEN GAVE BIRTH TO A BABY. THE KING WAS OVERJOYED.
O BRAHMANS, MY PENANCES HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL. I HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH A DAUGHTER.

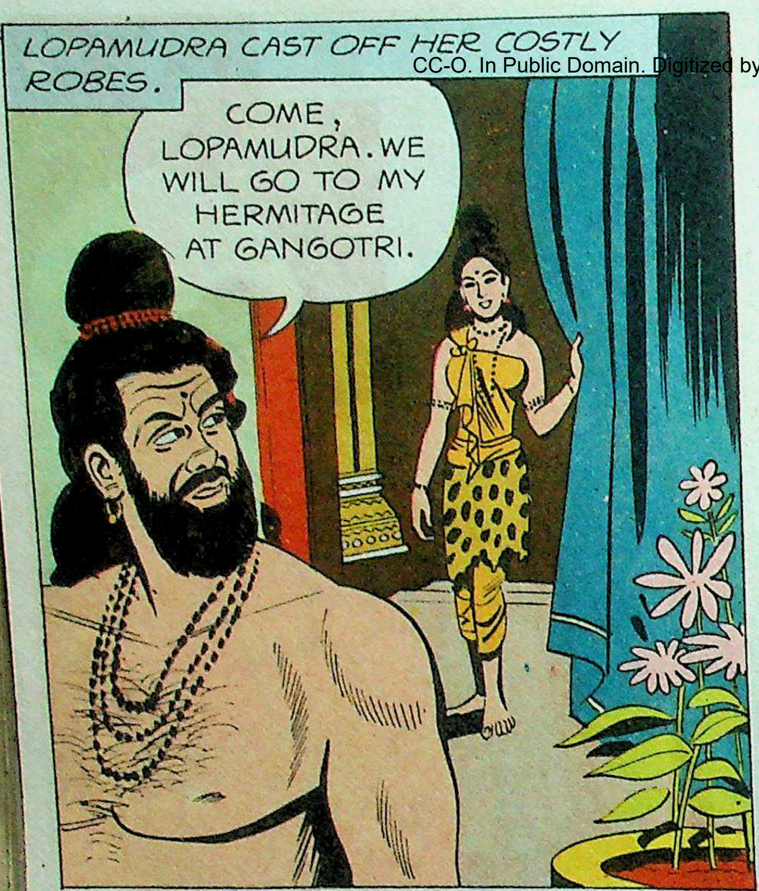

THE BRAHMANS WERE IMPRESSED BY THE BEAUTY OF THE CHILD.
SHE SHALL BE CALLED LOPAMUDRA.


LOPAMUDRA GREW UP INTO A BEAUTIFUL AND VIRTUOUS GIRL.
I MUST FIND A WORTHY HUSBAND FOR HER.
MEANWHILE —
LOPAMUDRA MUST NOW BE READY FOR MARRIAGE. I SHALL GO TO HER FATHER AND ASK FOR HER HAND.
HE WENT TO THE KING.
I WISH TO MARRY AND BEGET A SON. WILL YOU GIVE ME YOUR DAUGHTER?
THE KING WAS TROUBLED.
HOW CAN I BUT I DARE NOT DISPLEASE AGASTYA.


JUST THEN LOPAMUDRA CAME IN.
FATHER, WHY DO YOU HESITATE? I AM WILLING TO MARRY THE GREAT SAGE.
SO SHALL IT BE.

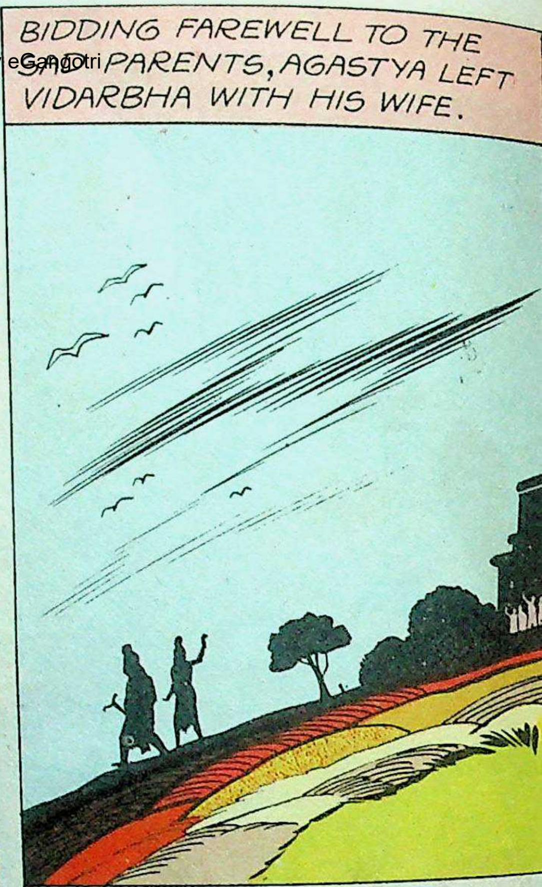

AGASTYA MARRIED LOPAMUDRA.


AFTER THE WEDDING –
LOPAMUDRA, YOUR ROYAL ROBES DO NOT BEFIT A SAGE'S WIFE. DISCARD THEM.
HENCEFORTH I SHALL WEAR ONLY BARK AND SKIN AND RAGS MY LORD.

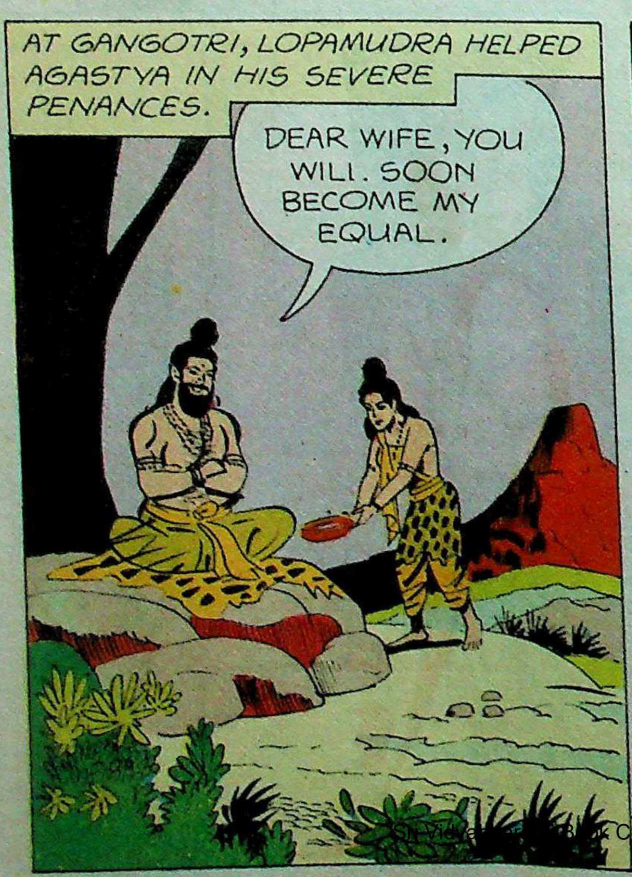


LOPAMUDRA CAST OFF HER COSTLY ROBES.

COME, LOPAMUDRA. WE WILL GO TO MY HERMITAGE AT GANGOTRI.

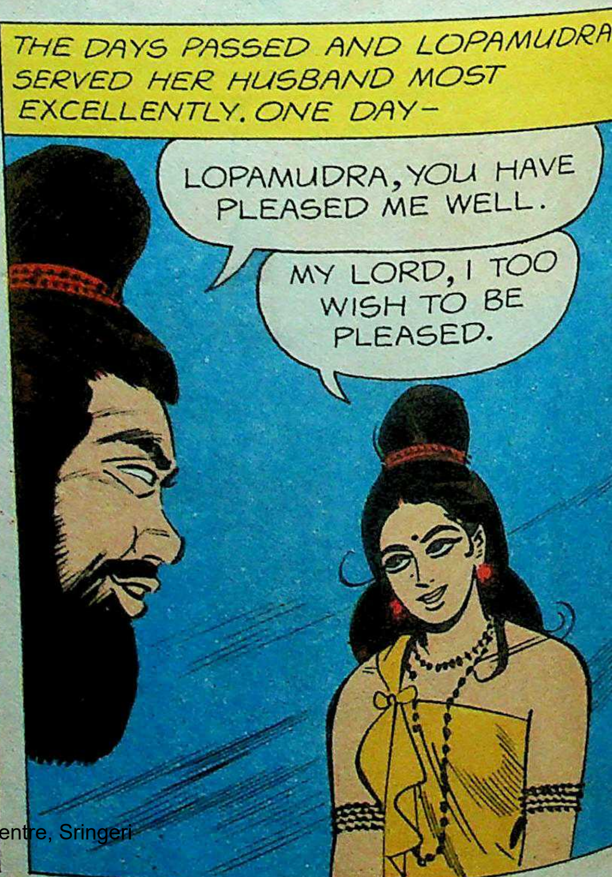


BIDDING FAREWELL TO THE SAD PARENTS, AGASTYA LEFT VIDARBHA WITH HIS WIFE.



AT GANGOTRI, LOPAMUDRA HELPED AGASTYA IN HIS SEVERE PENANCES.

DEAR WIFE, YOU WILL SOON BECOME MY EQUAL.



THE DAYS PASSED AND LOPAMUDRA SERVED HER HUSBAND MOST EXCELLENTLY. ONE DAY–

LOPAMUDRA, YOU HAVE PLEASED ME WELL.
MY LORD, I TOO WISH TO BE PLEASED.

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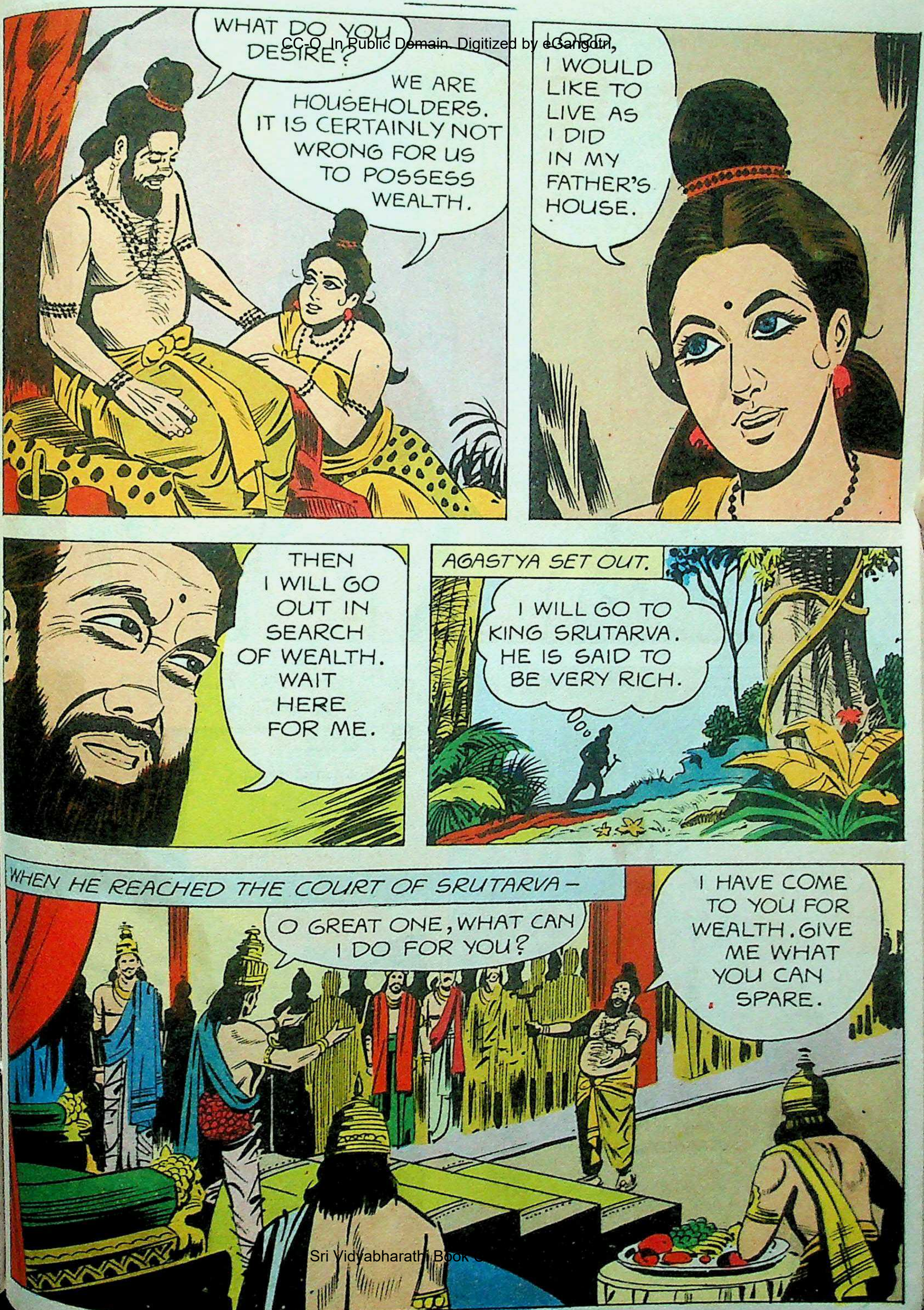
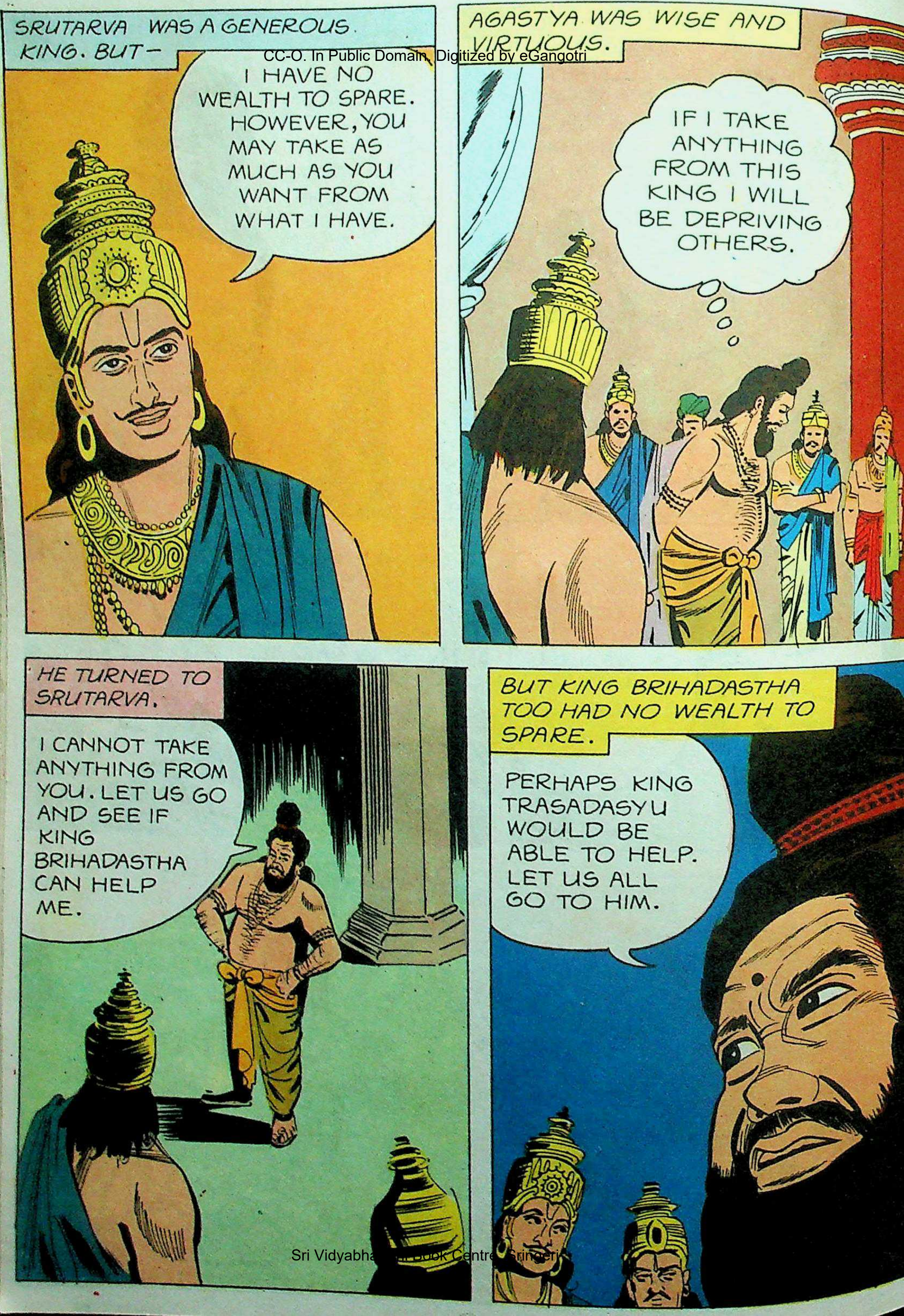
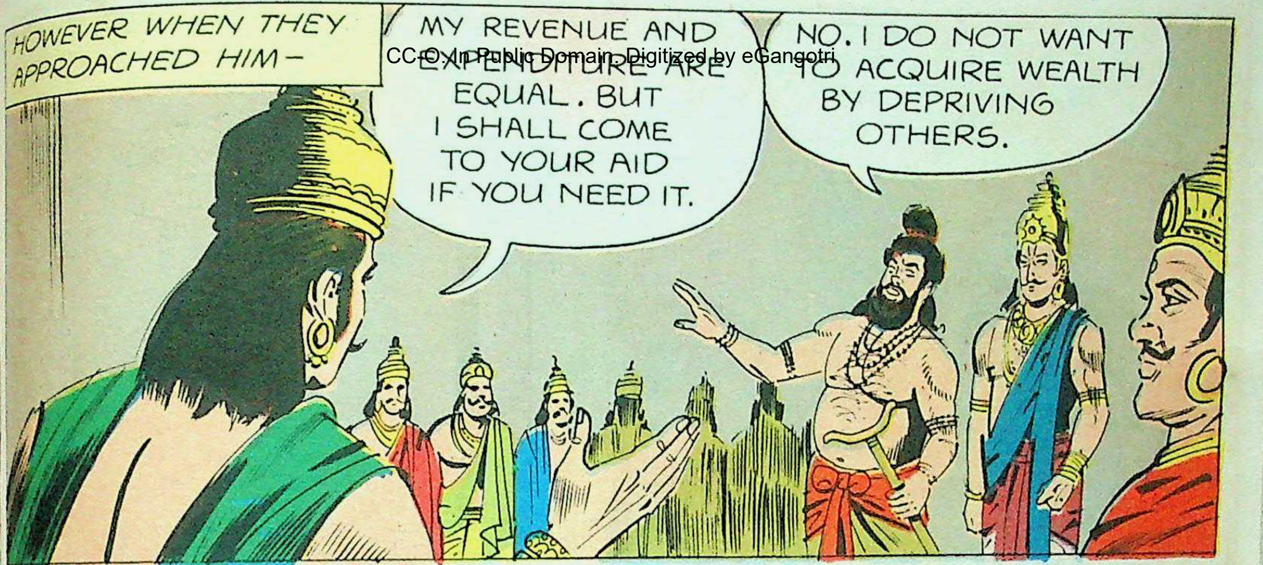
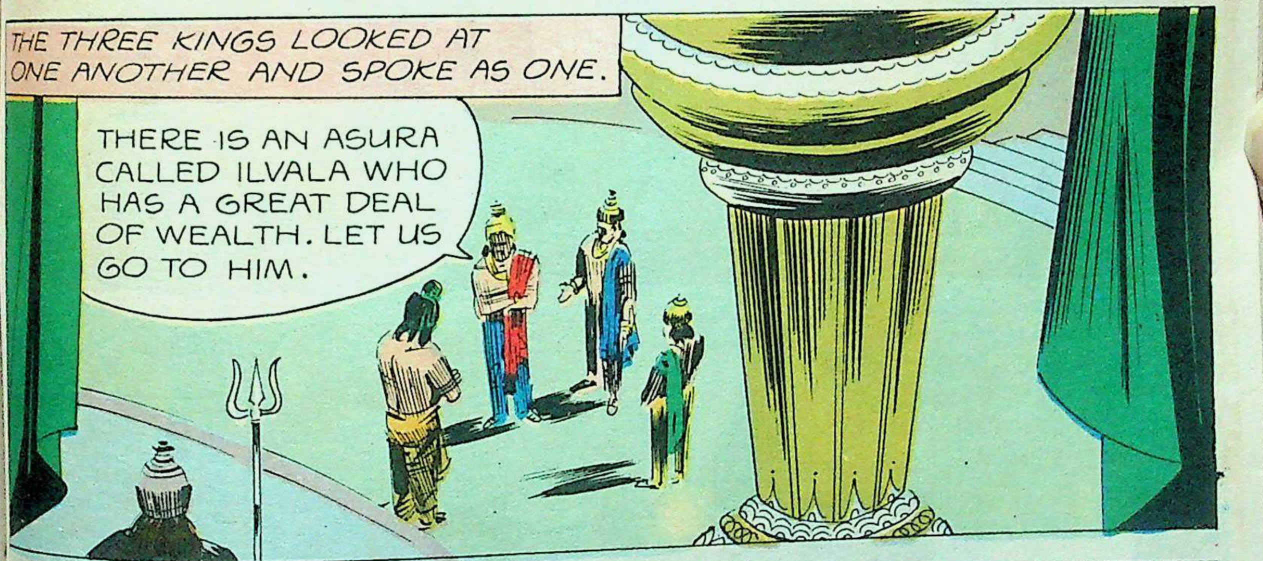
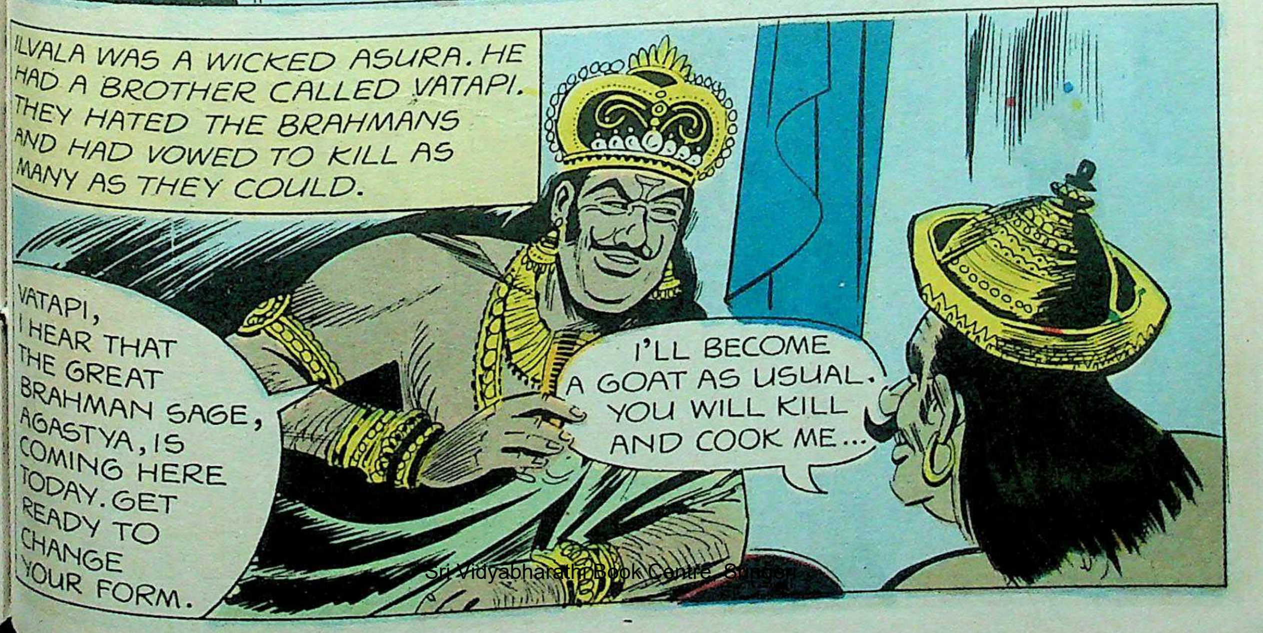
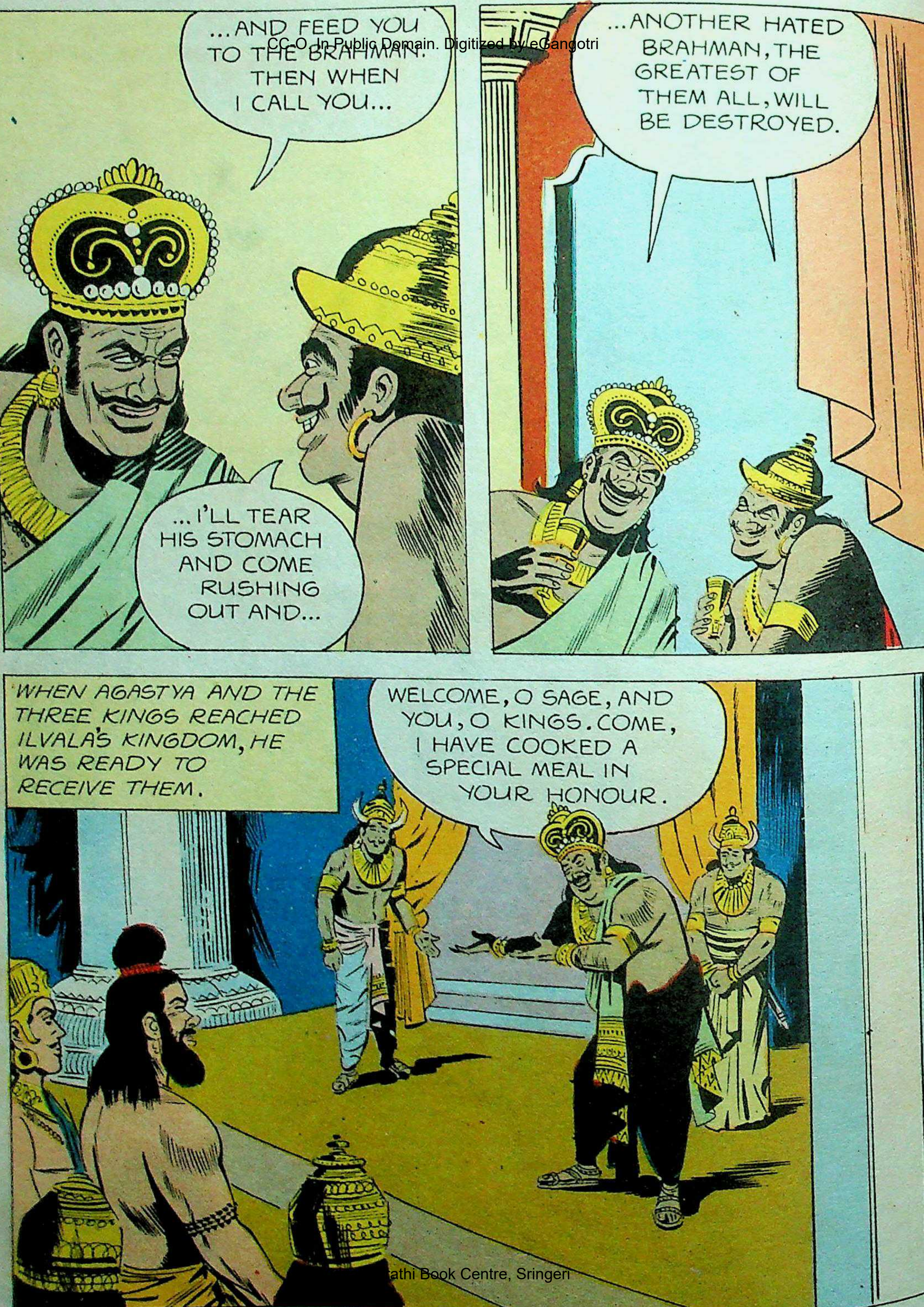

WHAT DO YOU DESIRE?
WE ARE HOUSEHOLDERS. IT IS CERTAINLY NOT WRONG FOR US TO POSSESS WEALTH.
LORD, I WOULD LIKE TO LIVE AS I DID IN MY FATHER'S HOUSE.
THEN I WILL GO OUT IN SEARCH OF WEALTH. WAIT HERE FOR ME.
AGASTYA SET OUT.
I WILL GO TO KING SRUTARVA. HE IS SAID TO BE VERY RICH.
WHEN HE REACHED THE COURT OF SRUTARVA –
O GREAT ONE, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I HAVE COME TO YOU FOR WEALTH. GIVE ME WHAT YOU CAN SPARE.

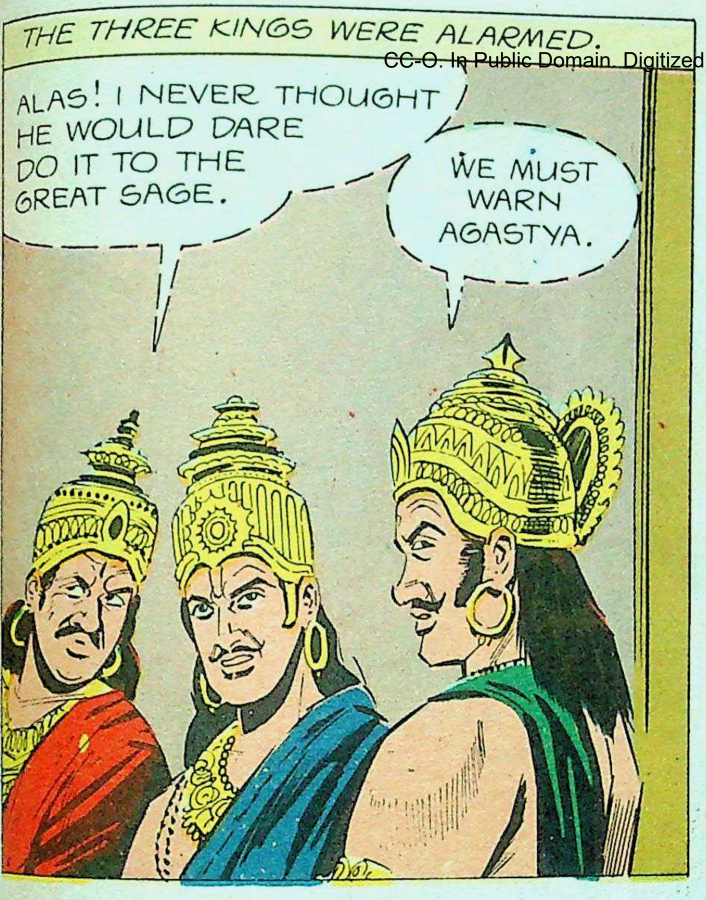

SRUTARVA WAS A GENEROUS KING. BUT–
I HAVE NO WEALTH TO SPARE. HOWEVER, YOU MAY TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT FROM WHAT I HAVE.
AGASTYA WAS WISE AND VIRTUOUS.
IF I TAKE ANYTHING FROM THIS KING I WILL BE DEPRIVING OTHERS.
HE TURNED TO SRUTARVA.
I CANNOT TAKE ANYTHING FROM YOU. LET US GO AND SEE IF KING BRIHADASTHA CAN HELP ME.
BUT KING BRIHADASTHA TOO HAD NO WEALTH TO SPARE.
PERHAPS KING TRASADASYU WOULD BE ABLE TO HELP. LET US ALL GO TO HIM.

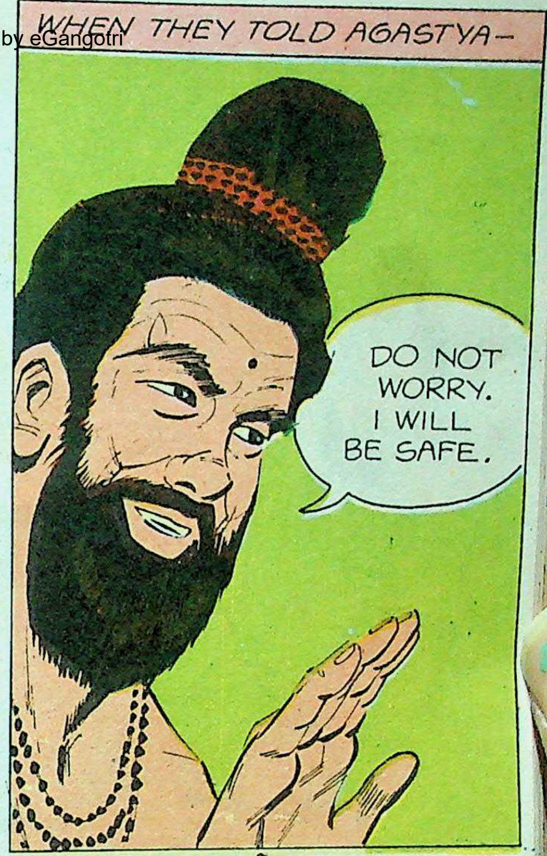

HOWEVER WHEN THEY APPROACHED HIM–
MY REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE ARE EQUAL. BUT I SHALL COME TO YOUR AID IF YOU NEED IT.
NO. I DO NOT WANT TO ACQUIRE WEALTH BY DEPRIVING OTHERS.

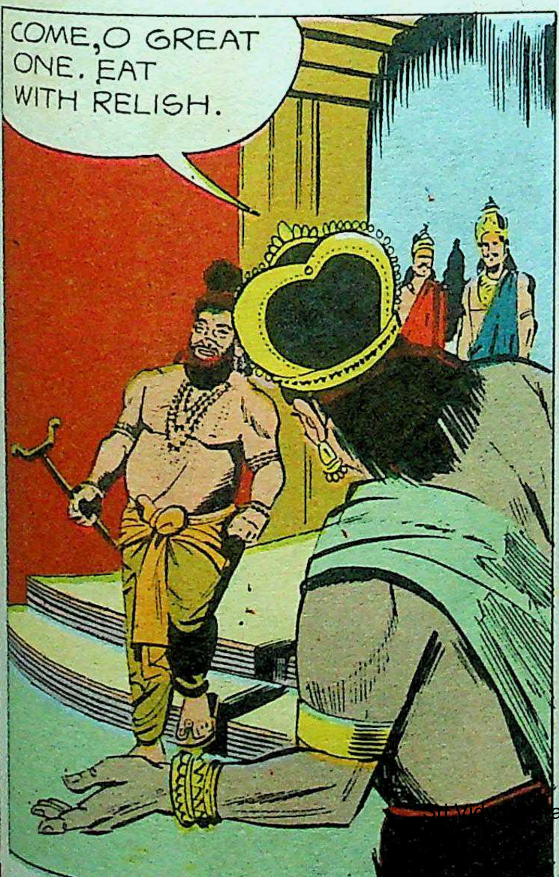

THE THREE KINGS LOOKED AT ONE ANOTHER AND SPOKE AS ONE.
THERE IS AN ASURA CALLED ILVALA WHO HAS A GREAT DEAL OF WEALTH. LET US GO TO HIM.

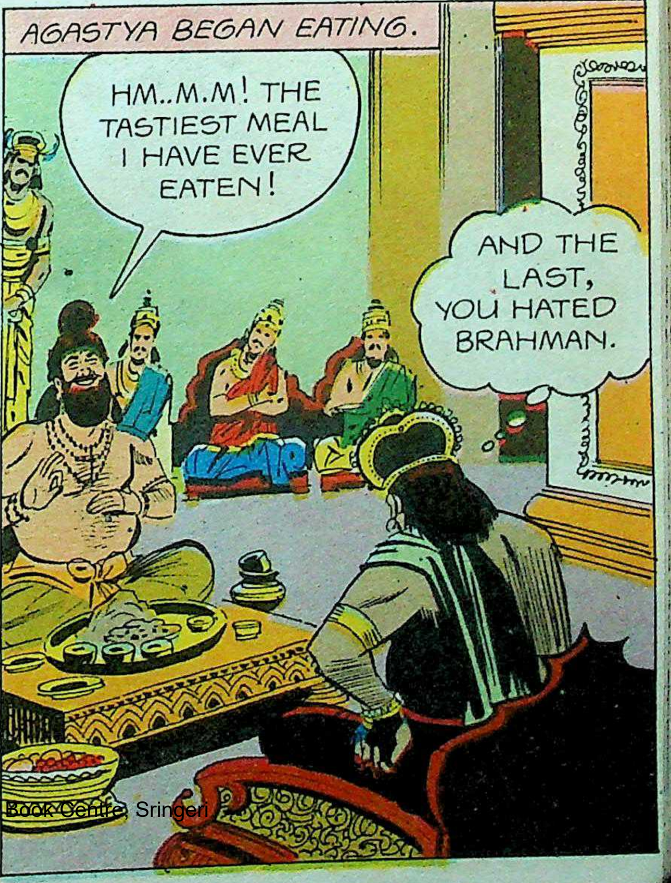

ILVALA WAS A WICKED ASURA. HE HAD A BROTHER CALLED VATAPI. THEY HATED THE BRAHMANS AND HAD VOWED TO KILL AS MANY AS THEY COULD.
VATAPI, I HEAR THAT THE GREAT BRAHMAN SAGE, AGASTYA, IS COMING HERE TODAY. GET READY TO CHANGE YOUR FORM.
I'LL BECOME A GOAT AS USUAL. YOU WILL KILL AND COOK ME...

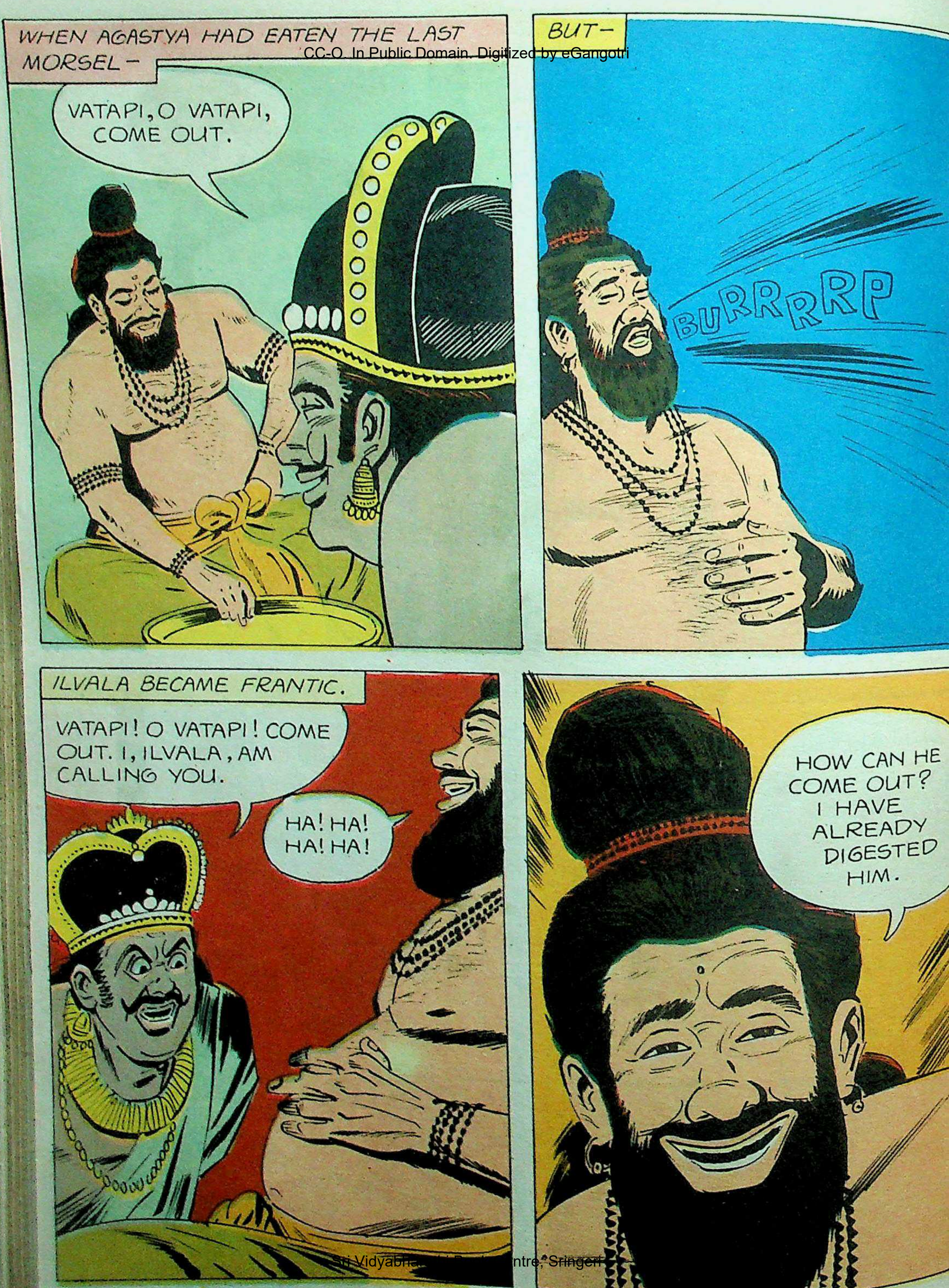

...AND FEED YOU TO THE BRAHMAN. THEN WHEN I CALL YOU...
...I'LL TEAR HIS STOMACH AND COME RUSHING OUT AND...
...ANOTHER HATED BRAHMAN, THE GREATEST OF THEM ALL, WILL BE DESTROYED.
WHEN AGASTYA AND THE THREE KINGS REACHED ILVALA'S KINGDOM, HE WAS READY TO RECEIVE THEM.
WELCOME, O SAGE, AND YOU, O KINGS. COME, I HAVE COOKED A SPECIAL MEAL IN YOUR HONOUR.


THE THREE KINGS WERE ALARMED.
ALAS! I NEVER THOUGHT HE WOULD DARE DO IT TO THE GREAT SAGE.
WE MUST WARN AGASTYA.

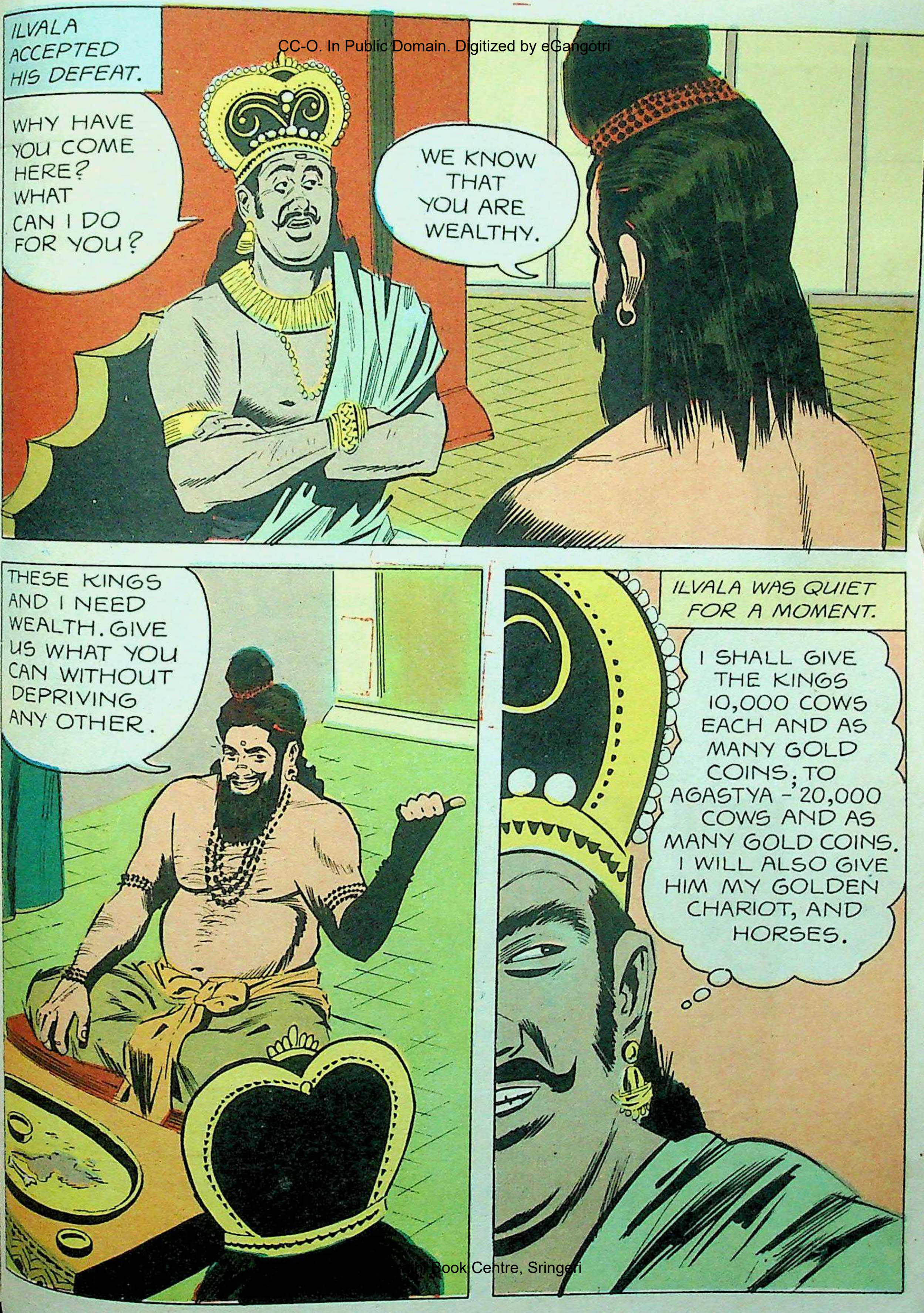

WHEN THEY TOLD AGASTYA—
DO NOT WORRY. I WILL BE SAFE.

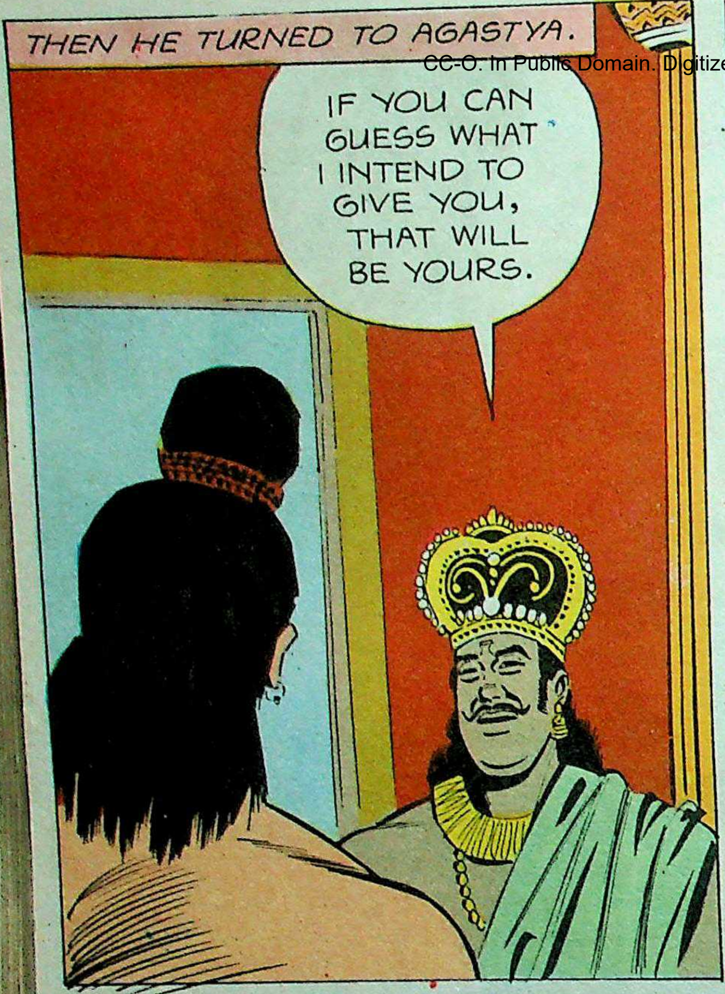

COME, O GREAT ONE. EAT WITH RELISH.

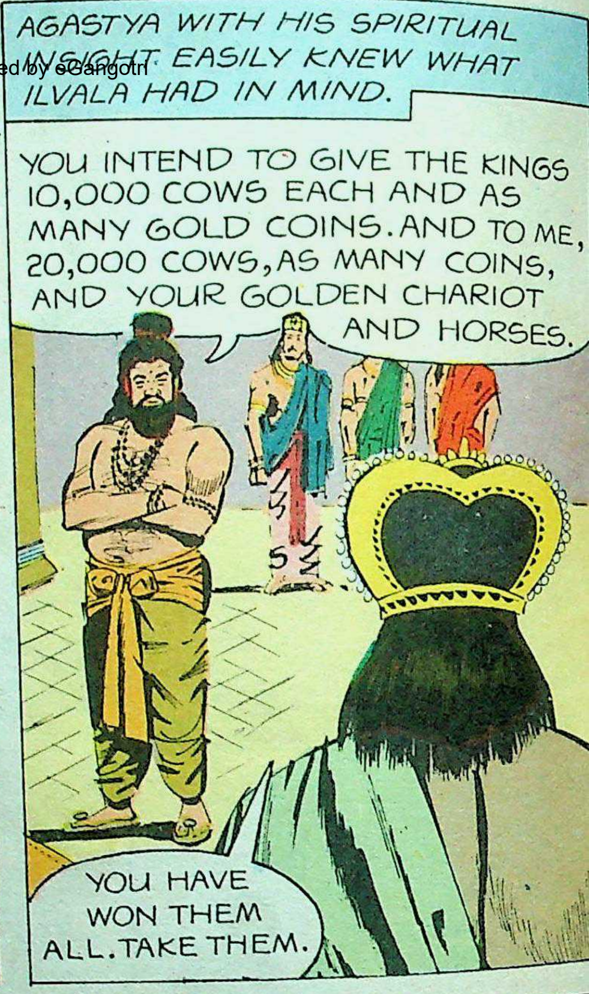

AGASTYA BEGAN EATING.
HM..M.M! THE TASTIEST MEAL I HAVE EVER EATEN!
AND THE LAST, YOU HATED BRAHMAN.

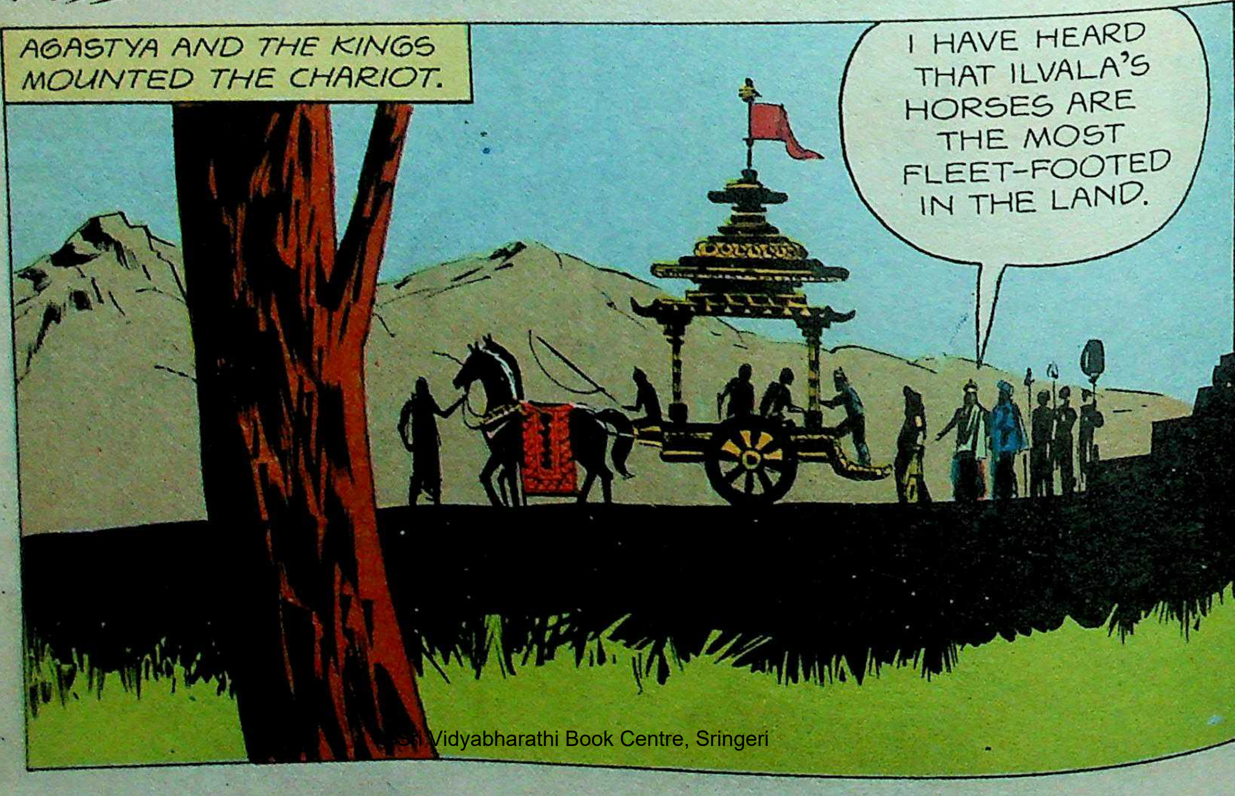

WHEN AGASTYA HAD EATEN THE LAST MORSEL–
VATAPI, O VATAPI, COME OUT.
BUT–
BURRRRP
ILVALA BECAME FRANTIC.
VATAPI! O VATAPI! COME OUT. I, ILVALA, AM CALLING YOU.
HA! HA! HA! HA!
HOW CAN HE COME OUT? I HAVE ALREADY DIGESTED HIM.

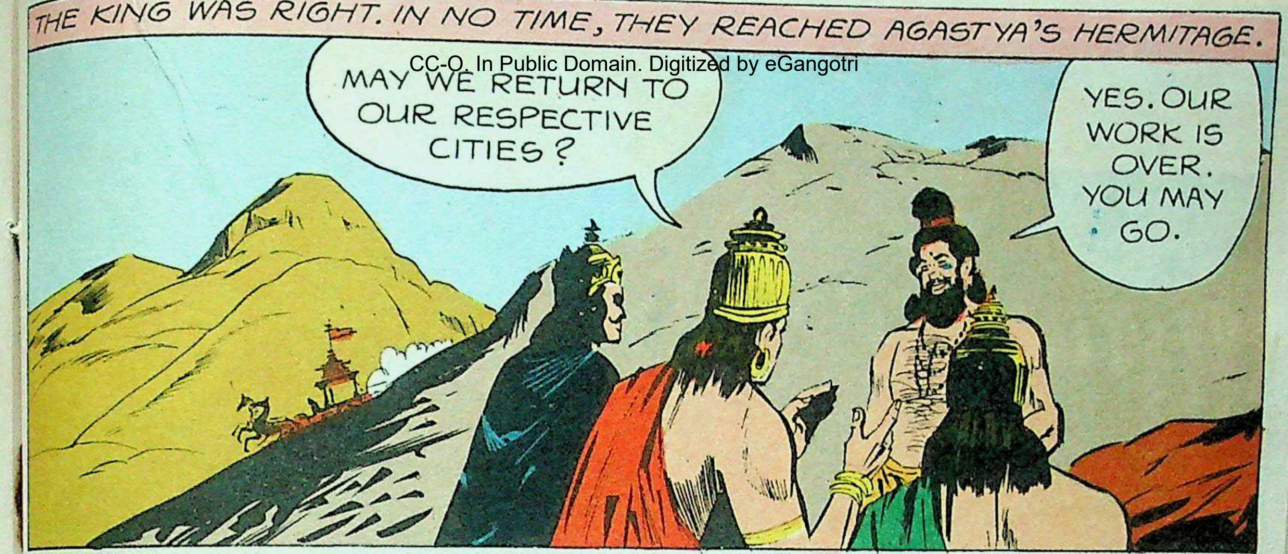
Sri Vidyabha ntre, Sringeri

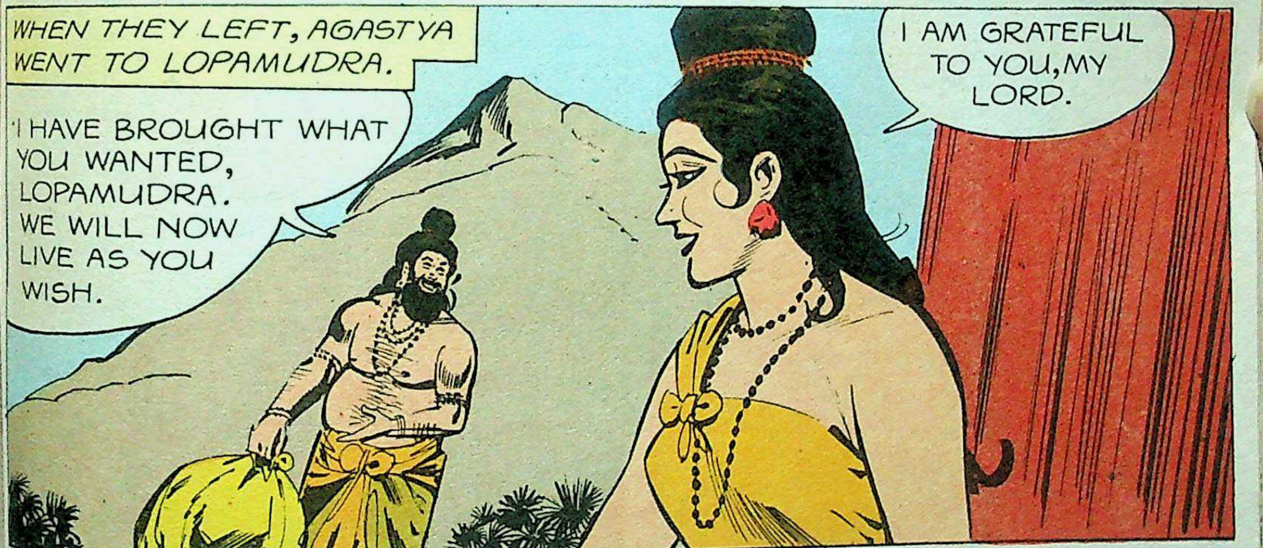

ILVALA ACCEPTED HIS DEFEAT.
WHY HAVE YOU COME HERE? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
WE KNOW THAT YOU ARE WEALTHY.
THESE KINGS AND I NEED WEALTH. GIVE US WHAT YOU CAN WITHOUT DEPRIVING ANY OTHER.
ILVALA WAS QUIET FOR A MOMENT.
I SHALL GIVE THE KINGS 10,000 COWS EACH AND AS MANY GOLD COINS; TO AGASTYA - 20,000 COWS AND AS MANY GOLD COINS. I WILL ALSO GIVE HIM MY GOLDEN CHARIOT, AND HORSES.

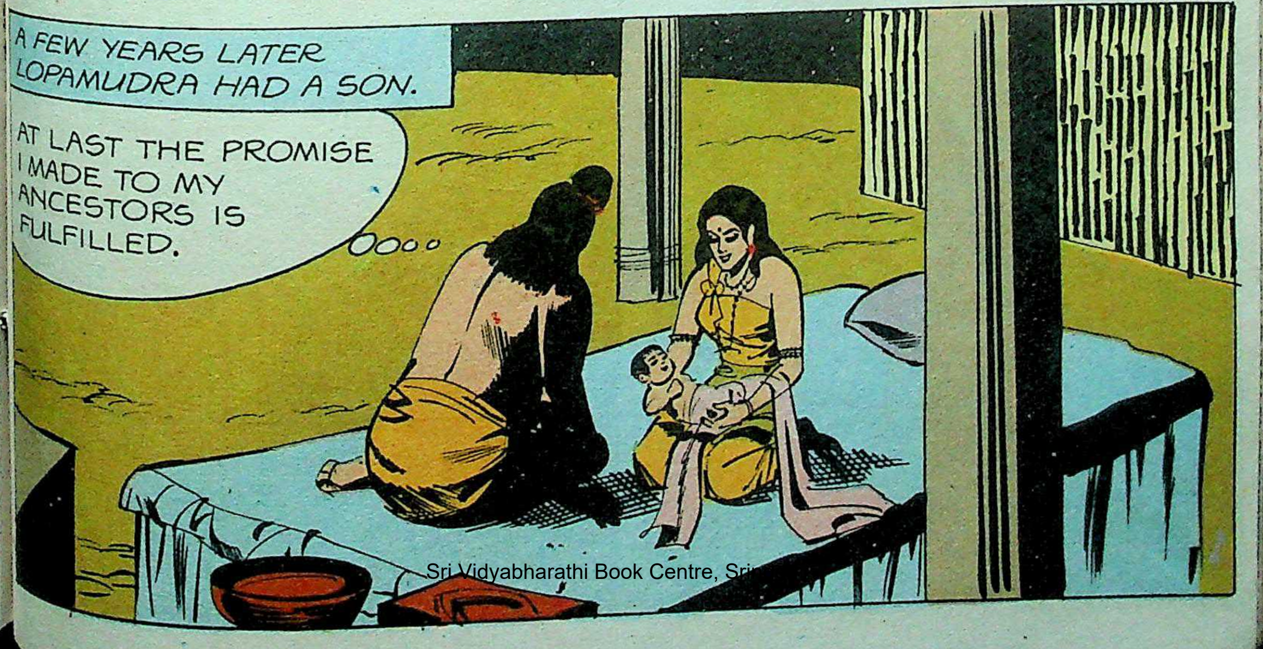

THEN HE TURNED TO AGASTYA.
IF YOU CAN GUESS WHAT I INTEND TO GIVE YOU, THAT WILL BE YOURS.

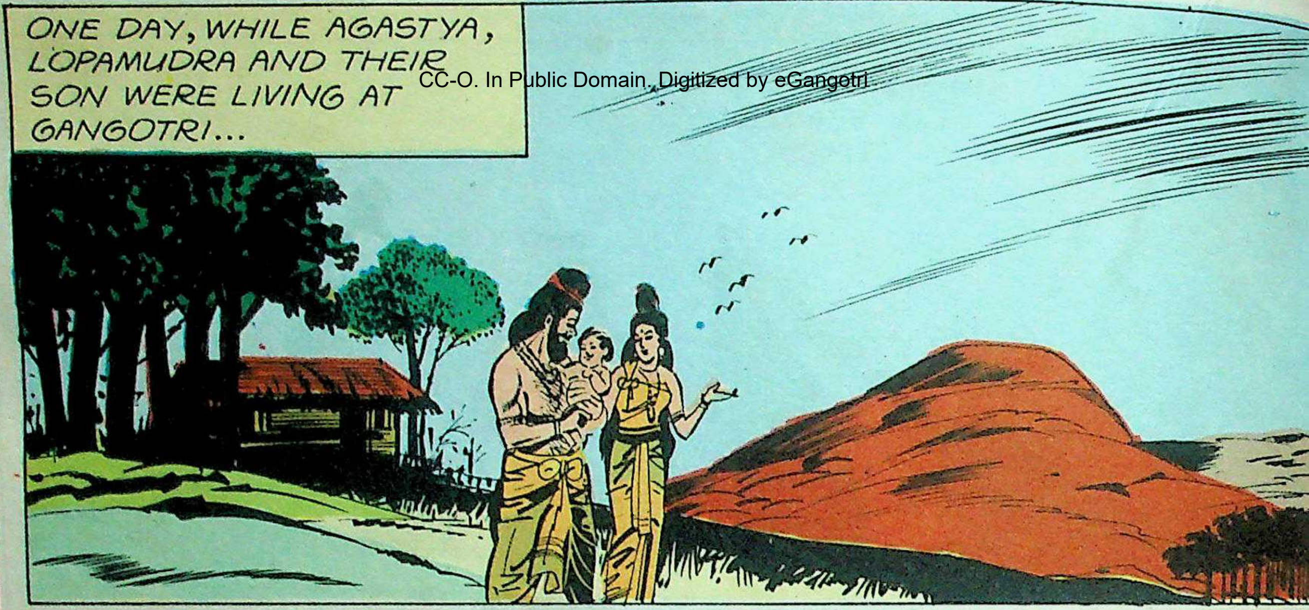

AGASTYA WITH HIS SPIRITUAL INSIGHT EASILY KNEW WHAT ILVALA HAD IN MIND.
YOU INTEND TO GIVE THE KINGS 10,000 COWS EACH AND AS MANY GOLD COINS. AND TO ME, 20,000 COWS, AS MANY COINS, AND YOUR GOLDEN CHARIOT AND HORSES.
YOU HAVE WON THEM ALL. TAKE THEM.

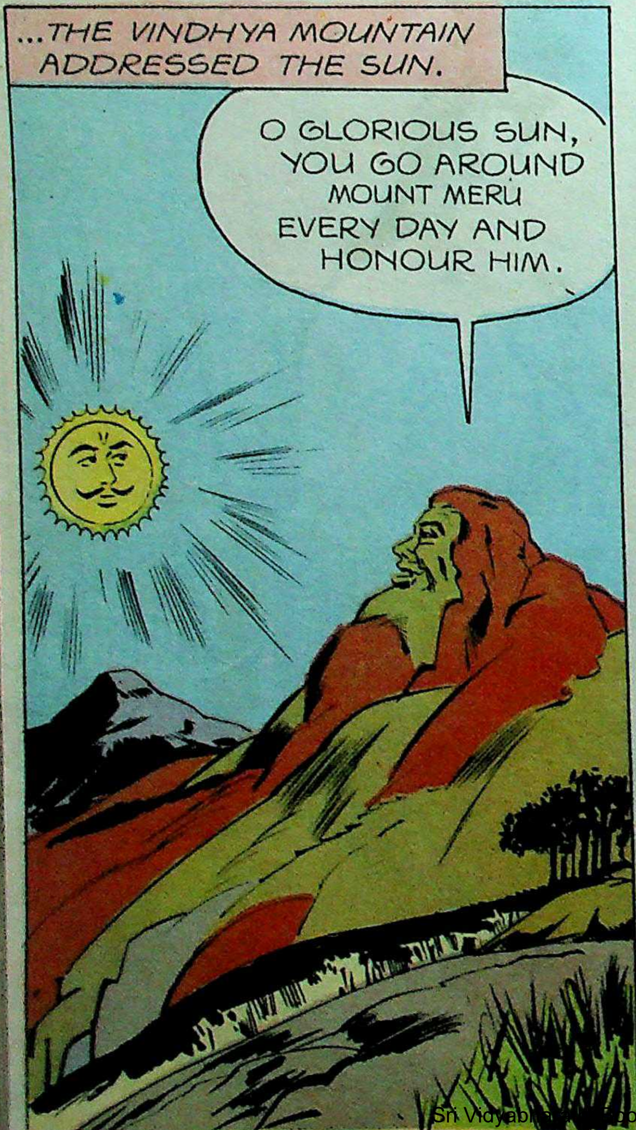

AGASTYA AND THE KINGS MOUNTED THE CHARIOT.
I HAVE HEARD THAT ILVALA'S HORSES ARE THE MOST FLEET-FOOTED IN THE LAND.

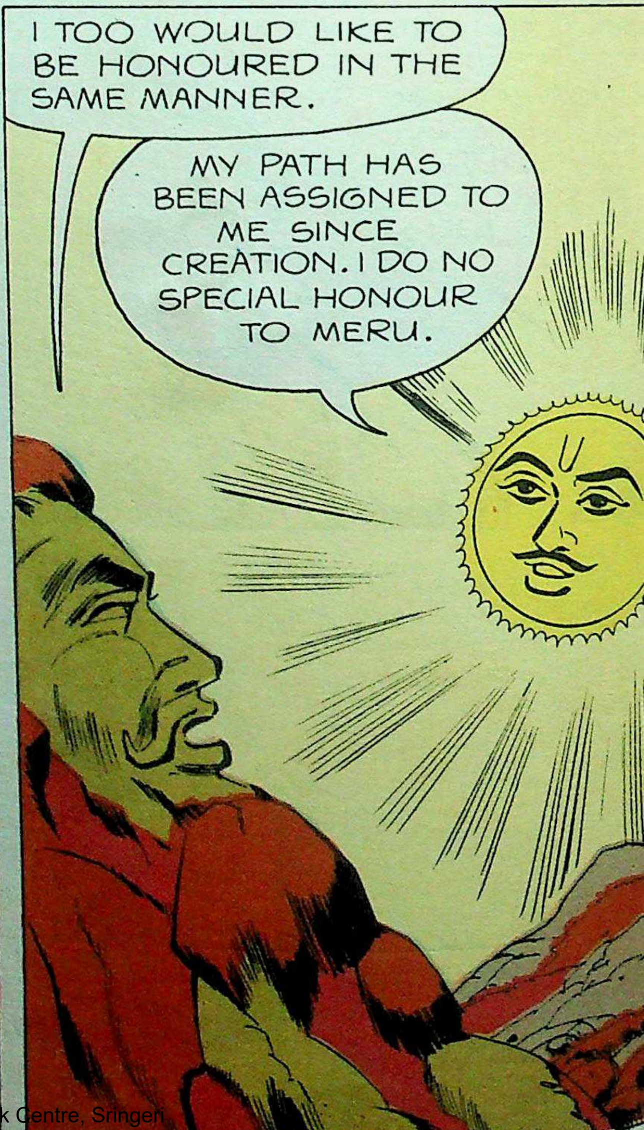

THE KING WAS RIGHT. IN NO TIME, THEY REACHED AGASTYA'S HERMITAGE.
MAY WE RETURN TO OUR RESPECTIVE CITIES?
YES. OUR WORK IS OVER. YOU MAY GO.


WHEN THEY LEFT, AGASTYA WENT TO LOPAMUDRA.
I HAVE BROUGHT WHAT YOU WANTED, LOPAMUDRA. WE WILL NOW LIVE AS YOU WISH.
I AM GRATEFUL TO YOU, MY LORD.


A FEW YEARS LATER LOPAMUDRA HAD A SON.
AT LAST THE PROMISE I MADE TO MY ANCESTORS IS FULFILLED.


ONE DAY, WHILE AGASTYA, LOPAMUDRA AND THEIR SON WERE LIVING AT GANGOTRI...


...THE VINDHYA MOUNTAIN ADDRESSED THE SUN.
O GLORIOUS SUN, YOU GO AROUND MOUNT MERU EVERY DAY AND HONOUR HIM.


I TOO WOULD LIKE TO BE HONOURED IN THE SAME MANNER.
MY PATH HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO ME SINCE CREATION. I DO NO SPECIAL HONOUR TO MERU.

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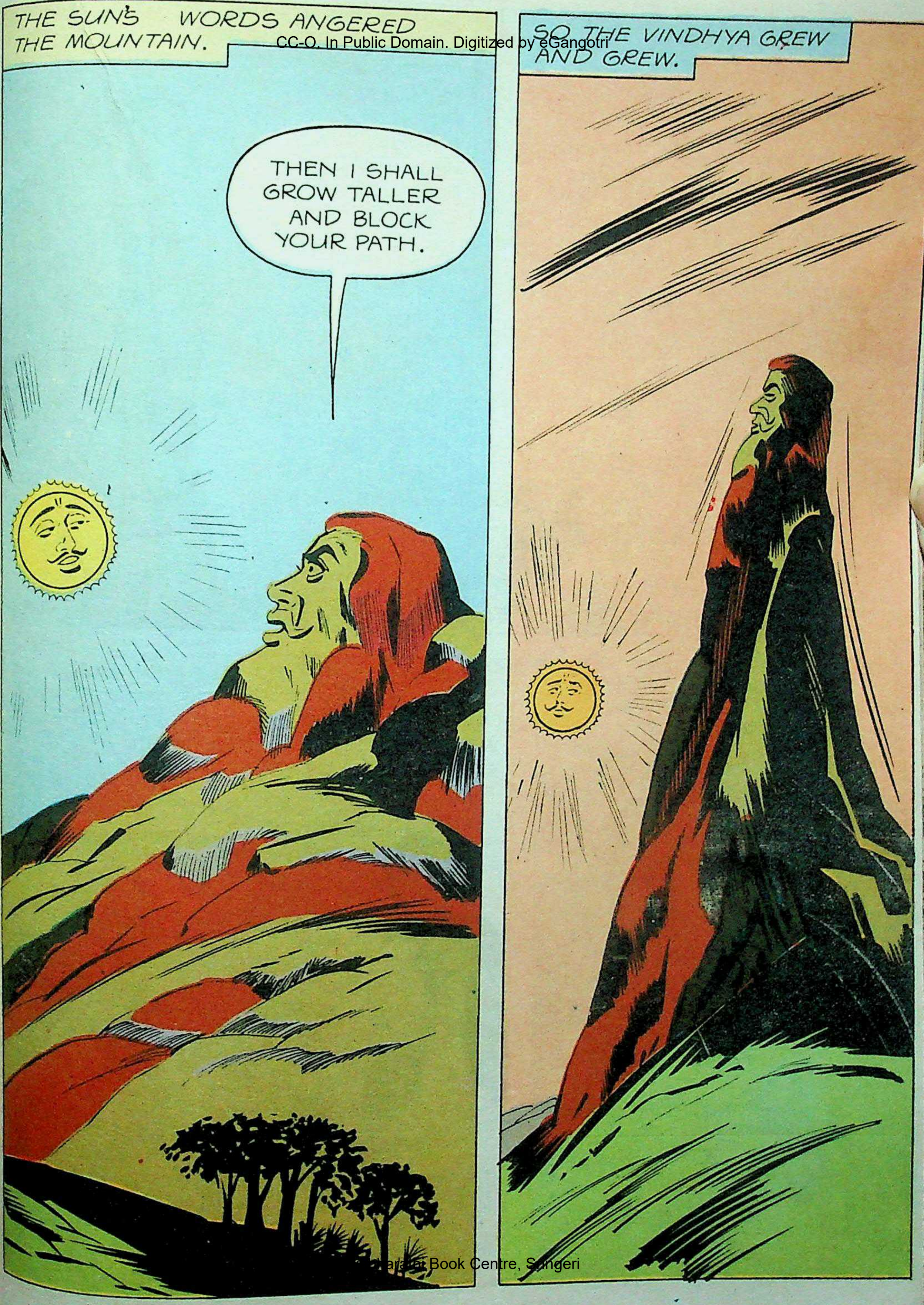
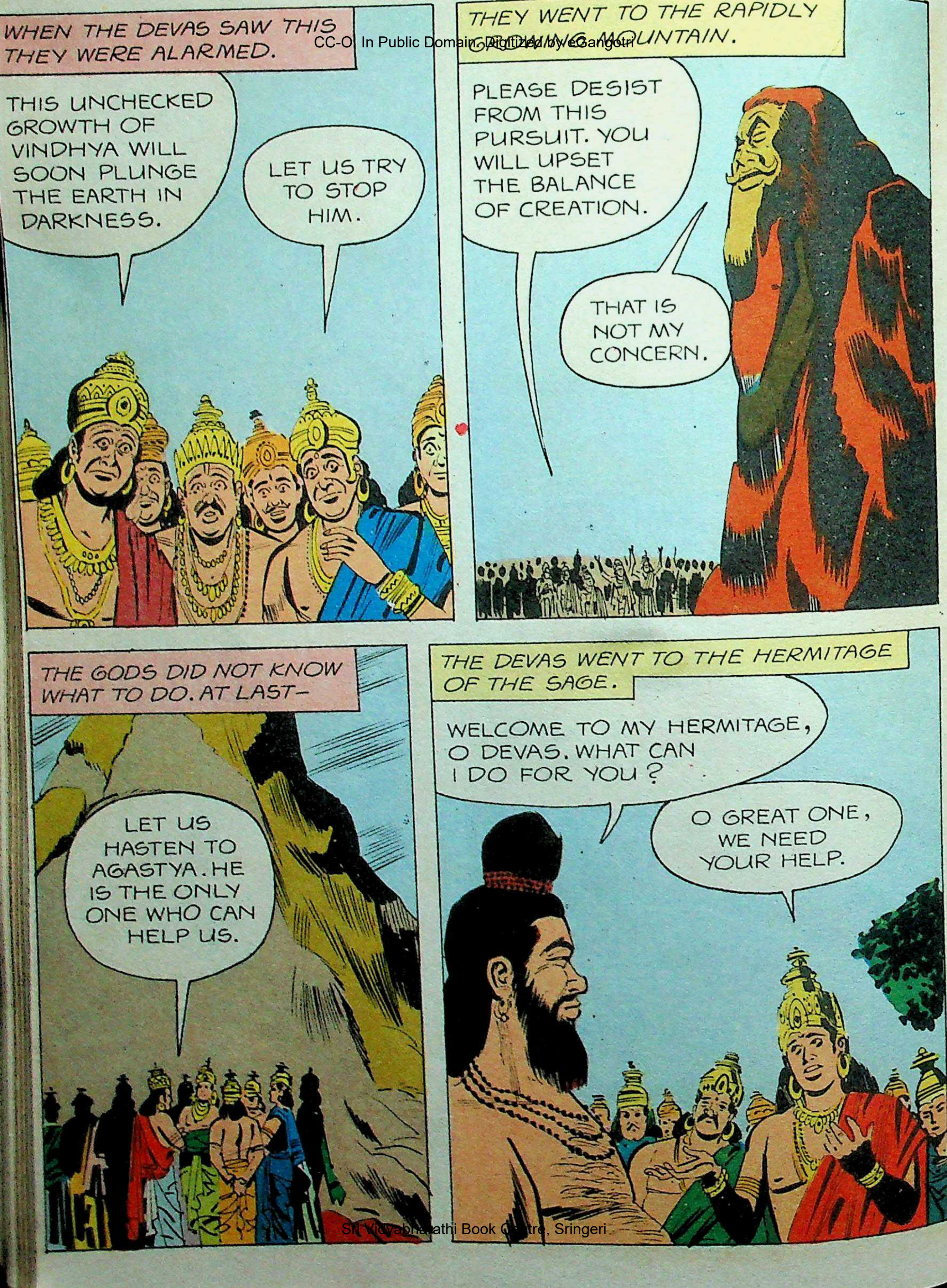
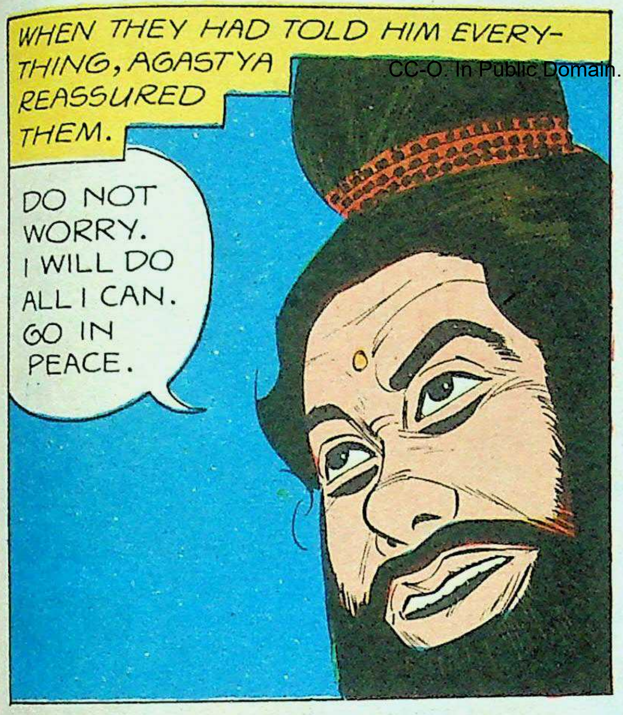
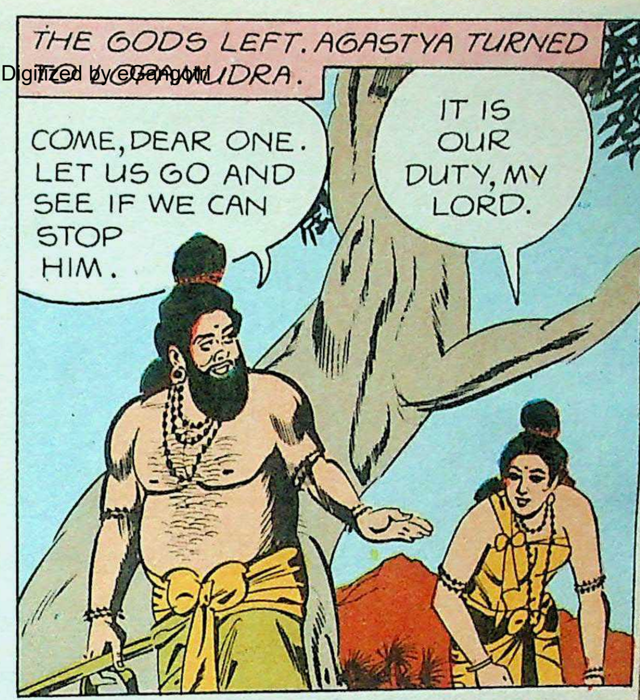
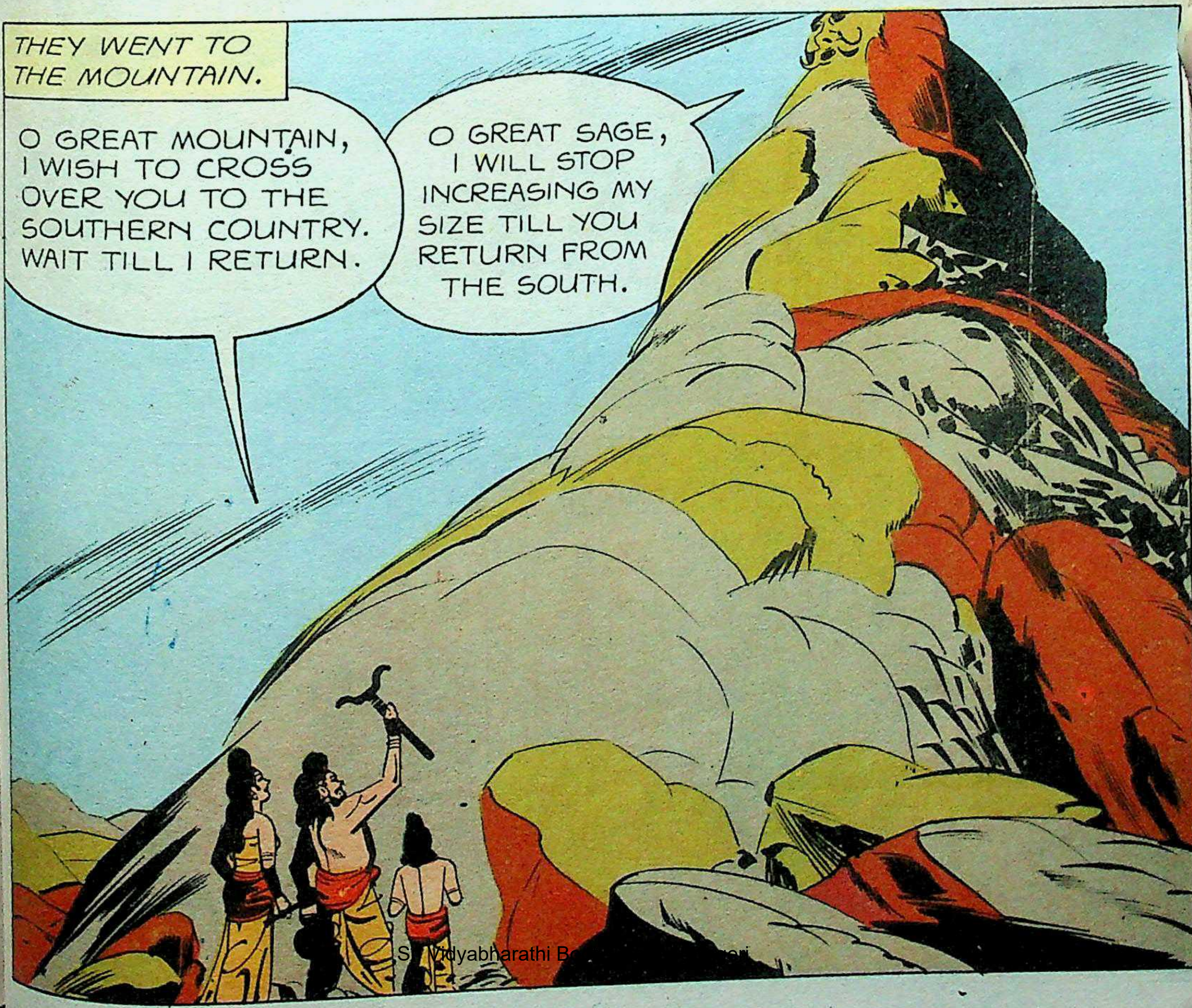
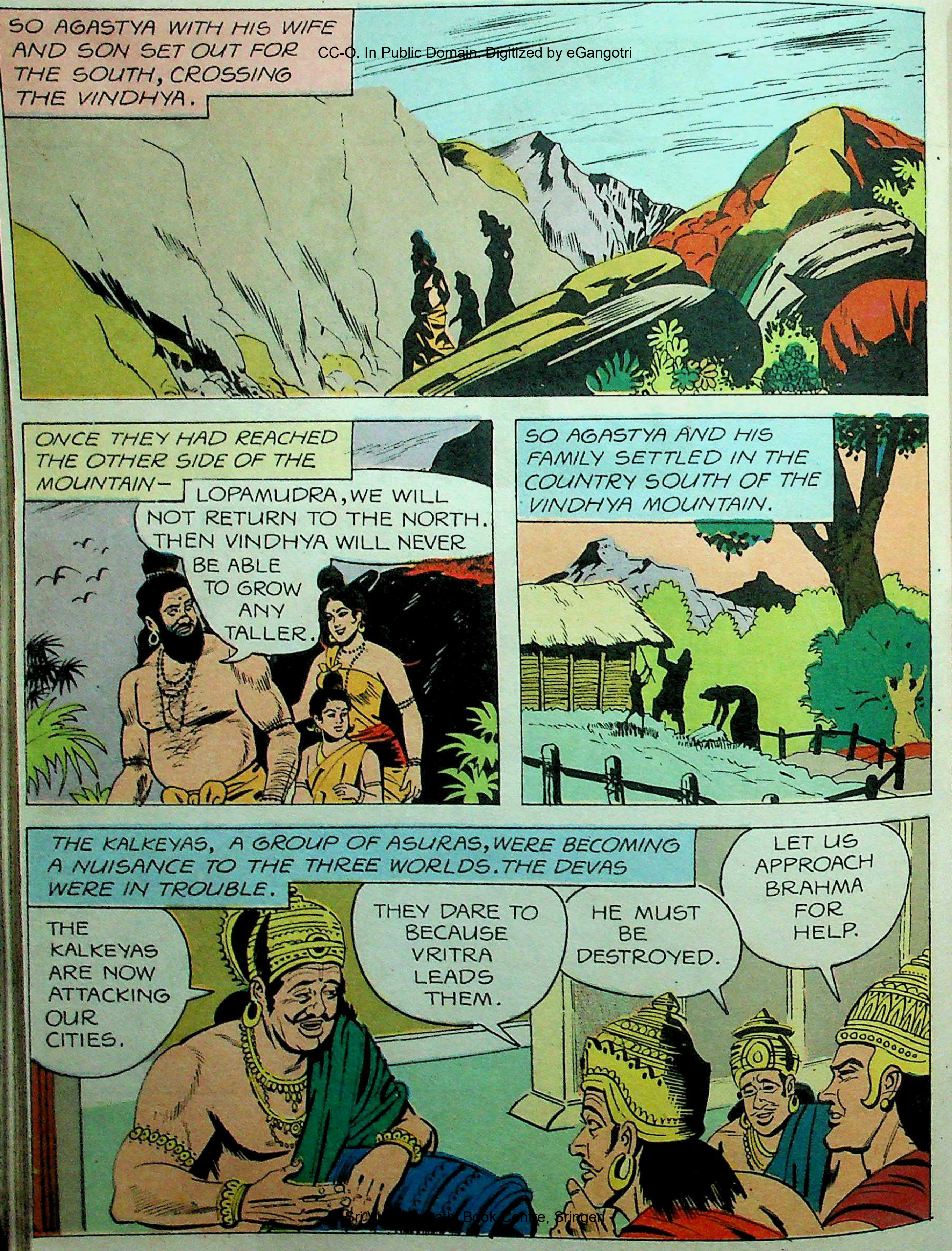

THE SUN'S WORDS ANGERED THE MOUNTAIN.
THEN I SHALL GROW TALLER AND BLOCK YOUR PATH.
SO THE VINDHYA GREW AND GREW.


WHEN THE DEVAS SAW THIS THEY WERE ALARMED.
THIS UNCHECKED GROWTH OF VINDHYA WILL SOON PLUNGE THE EARTH IN DARKNESS.
LET US TRY TO STOP HIM.
THEY WENT TO THE RAPIDLY GROWING MOUNTAIN.
PLEASE DESIST FROM THIS PURSUIT. YOU WILL UPSET THE BALANCE OF CREATION.
THAT IS NOT MY CONCERN.
THE GODS DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO. AT LAST–
LET US HASTEN TO AGASTYA. HE IS THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP US.
THE DEVAS WENT TO THE HERMITAGE OF THE SAGE.
WELCOME TO MY HERMITAGE, O DEVAS. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
O GREAT ONE, WE NEED YOUR HELP.


WHEN THEY HAD TOLD HIM EVERYTHING, AGASTYA REASSURED THEM.
DO NOT WORRY. I WILL DO ALL I CAN. GO IN PEACE.


THE GODS LEFT. AGASTYA TURNED TO LOPAMUDRA.
COME, DEAR ONE. LET US GO AND SEE IF WE CAN STOP HIM.
IT IS OUR DUTY, MY LORD.


THEY WENT TO THE MOUNTAIN.
O GREAT MOUNTAIN, I WISH TO CROSS OVER YOU TO THE SOUTHERN COUNTRY. WAIT TILL I RETURN.
O GREAT SAGE, I WILL STOP INCREASING MY SIZE TILL YOU RETURN FROM THE SOUTH.


SO AGASTYA WITH HIS WIFE AND SON SET OUT FOR THE SOUTH, CROSSING THE VINDHYA.
ONCE THEY HAD REACHED THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN—
LOPAMUDRA, WE WILL NOT RETURN TO THE NORTH. THEN VINDHYA WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO GROW ANY TALLER.
SO AGASTYA AND HIS FAMILY SETTLED IN THE COUNTRY SOUTH OF THE VINDHYA MOUNTAIN.
THE KALKEYAS, A GROUP OF ASURAS, WERE BECOMING A NUISANCE TO THE THREE WORLDS. THE DEVAS WERE IN TROUBLE.
THE KALKEYAS ARE NOW ATTACKING OUR CITIES.
THEY DARE TO BECAUSE VRITRA LEADS THEM.
HE MUST BE DESTROYED.
LET US APPROACH BRAHMA FOR HELP.

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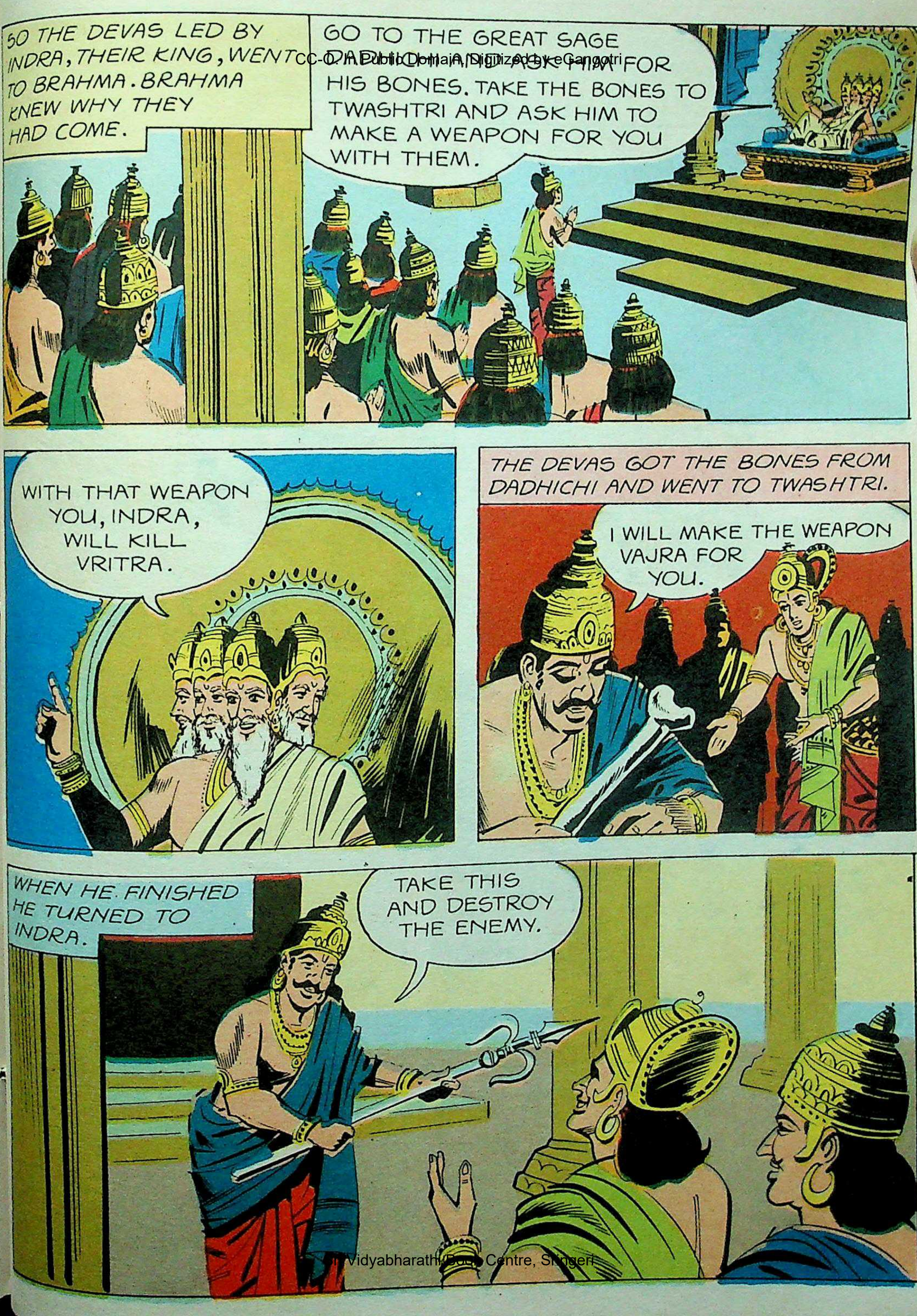
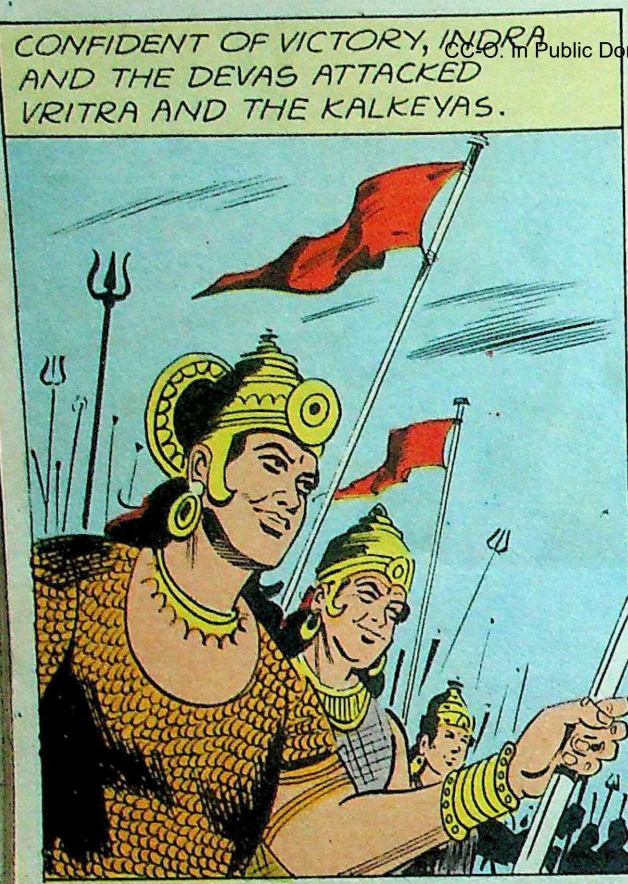
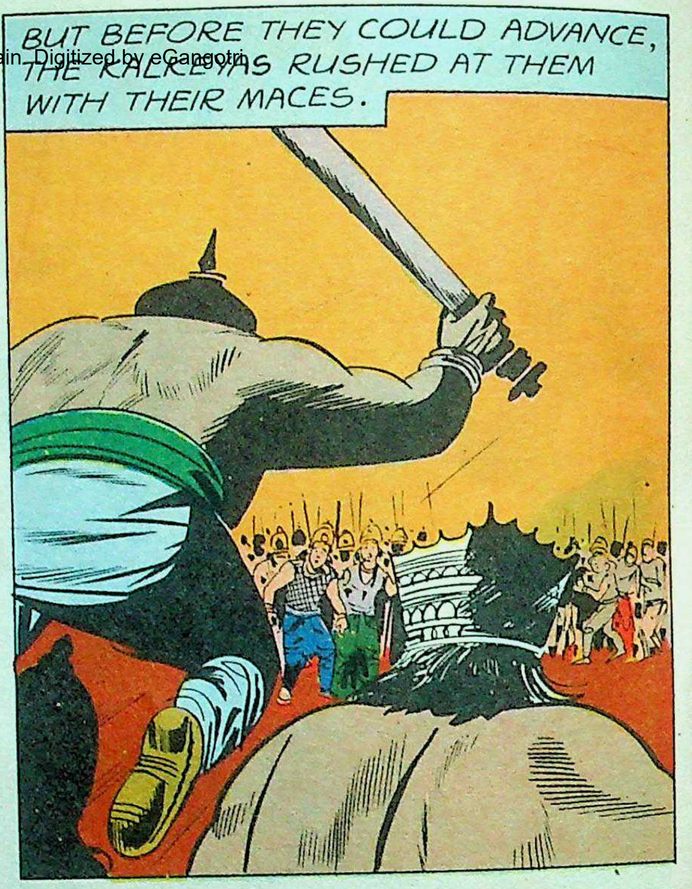
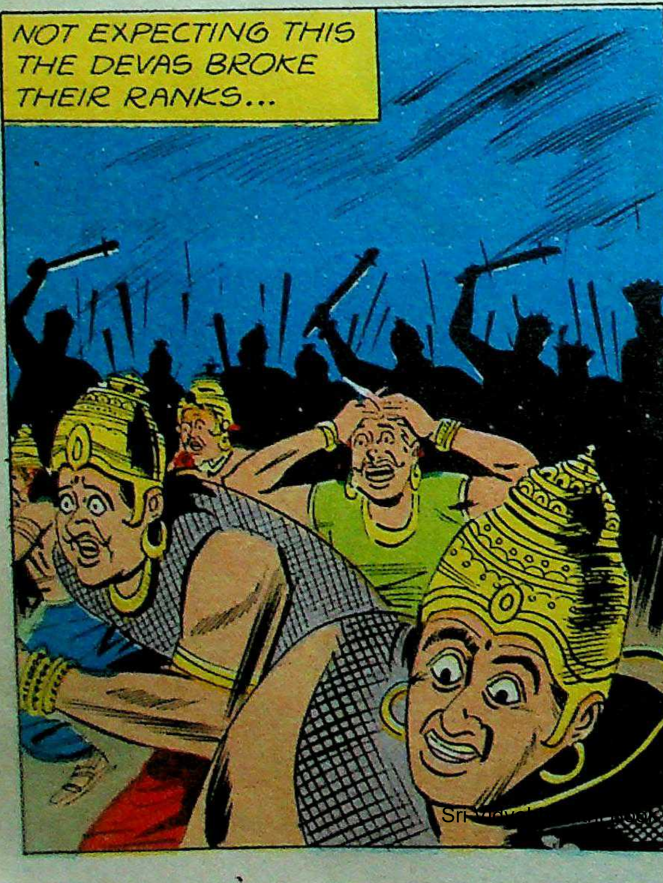

SO THE DEVAS LED BY INDRA, THEIR KING, WENT TO BRAHMA. BRAHMA KNEW WHY THEY HAD COME.
GO TO THE GREAT SAGE DADHICHI AND ASK HIM FOR HIS BONES. TAKE THE BONES TO TWASHTRI AND ASK HIM TO MAKE A WEAPON FOR YOU WITH THEM.
WITH THAT WEAPON YOU, INDRA, WILL KILL VRITRA.
THE DEVAS GOT THE BONES FROM DADHICHI AND WENT TO TWASHTRI.
I WILL MAKE THE WEAPON VAJRA FOR YOU.
WHEN HE FINISHED HE TURNED TO INDRA.
TAKE THIS AND DESTROY THE ENEMY.



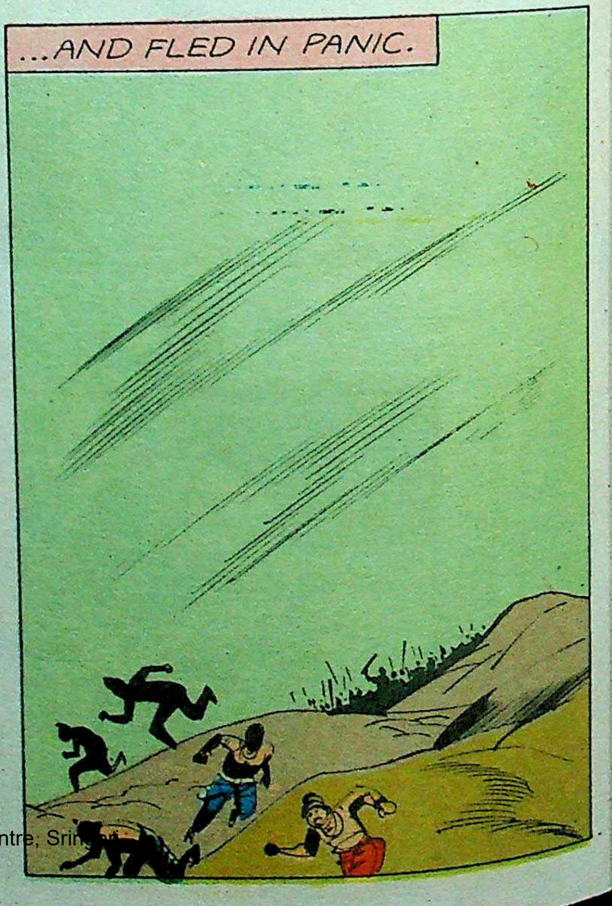
CONFIDENT OF VICTORY, INDRA AND THE DEVAS ATTACKED VRITRA AND THE KALKEYAS.



BUT BEFORE THEY COULD ADVANCE, THE KALKEYAS RUSHED AT THEM WITH THEIR MACES.



NOT EXPECTING THIS THE DEVAS BROKE THEIR RANKS...



...AND FLED IN PANIC.

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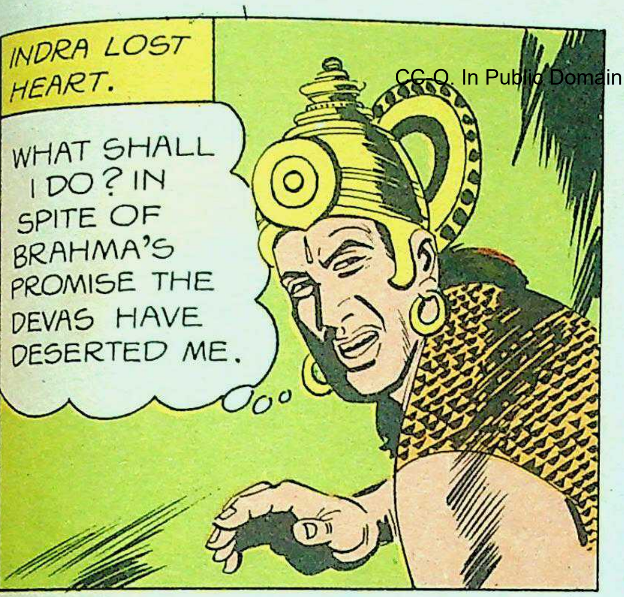
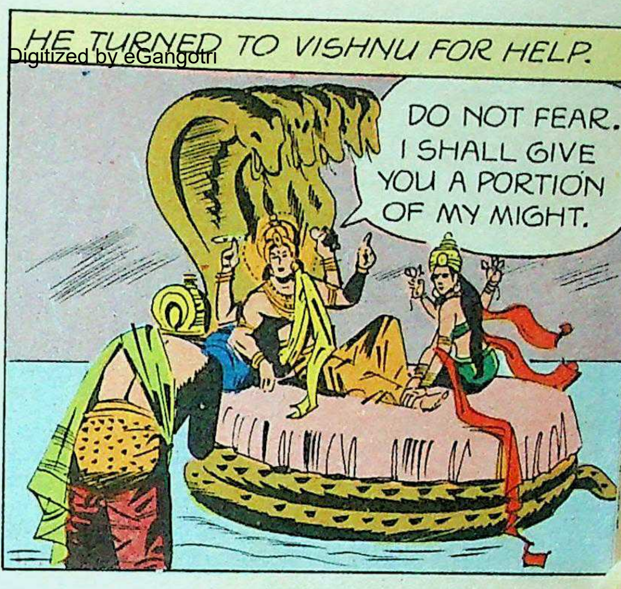
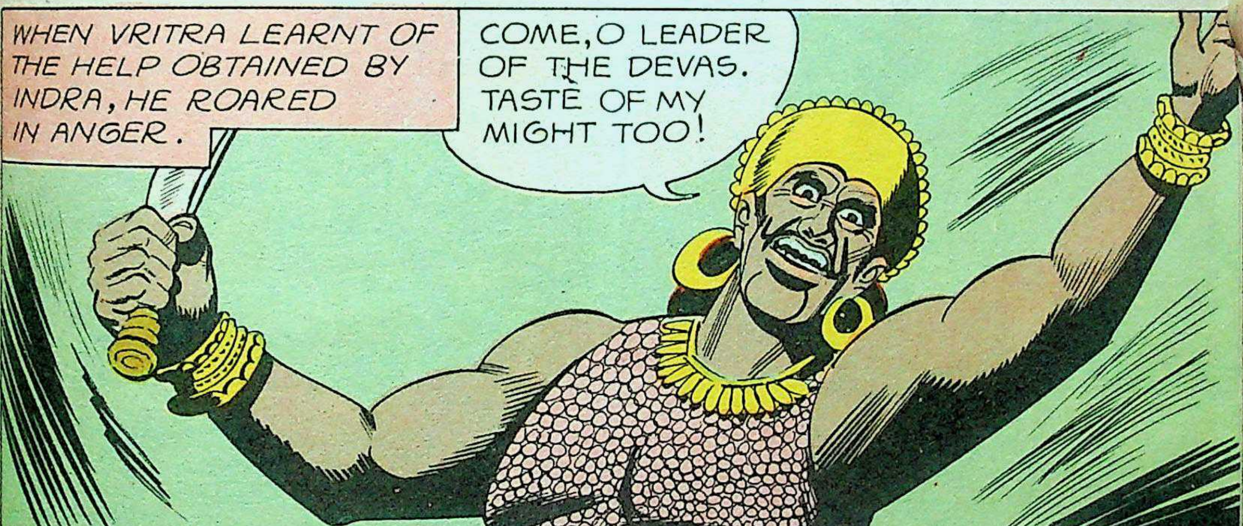
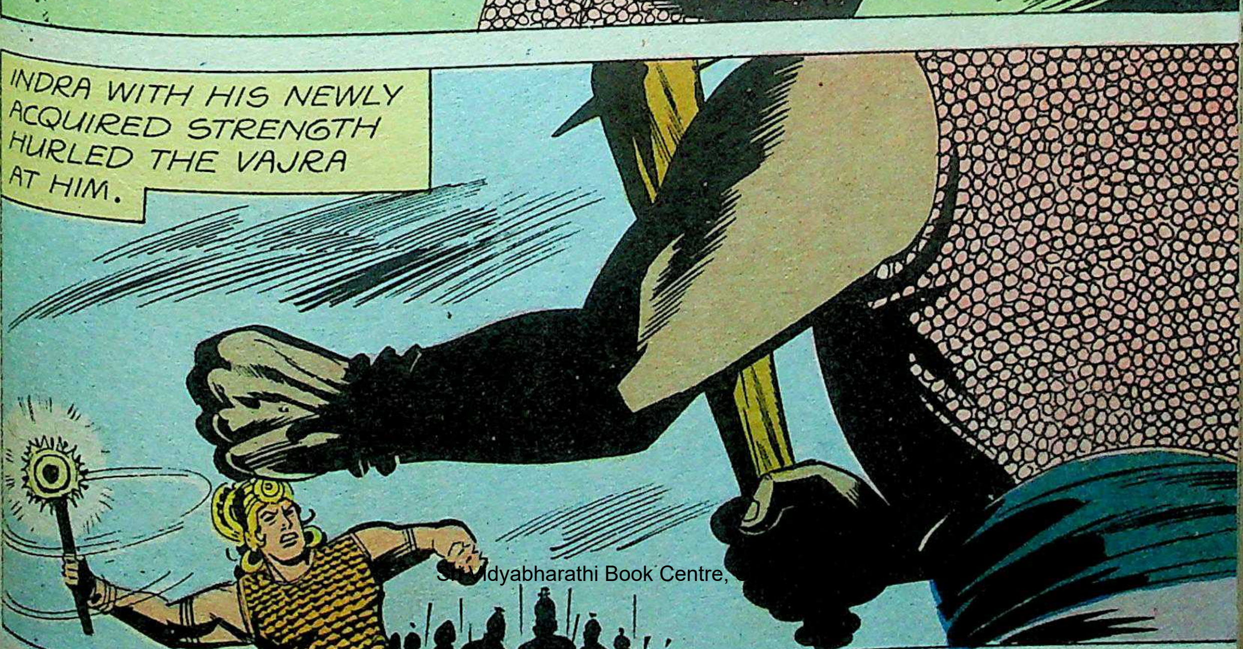
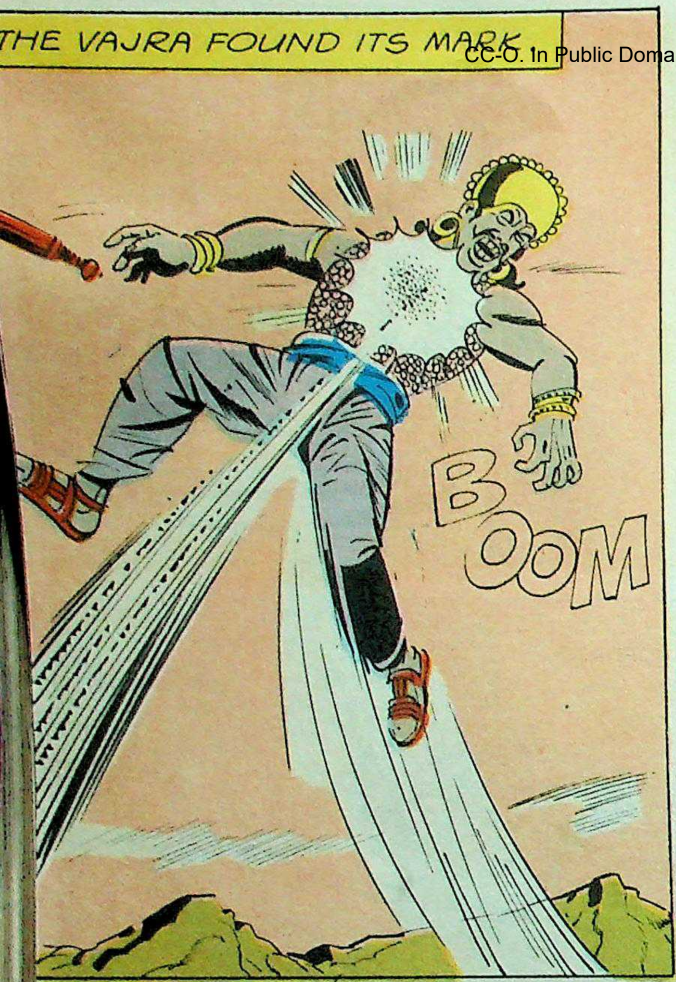
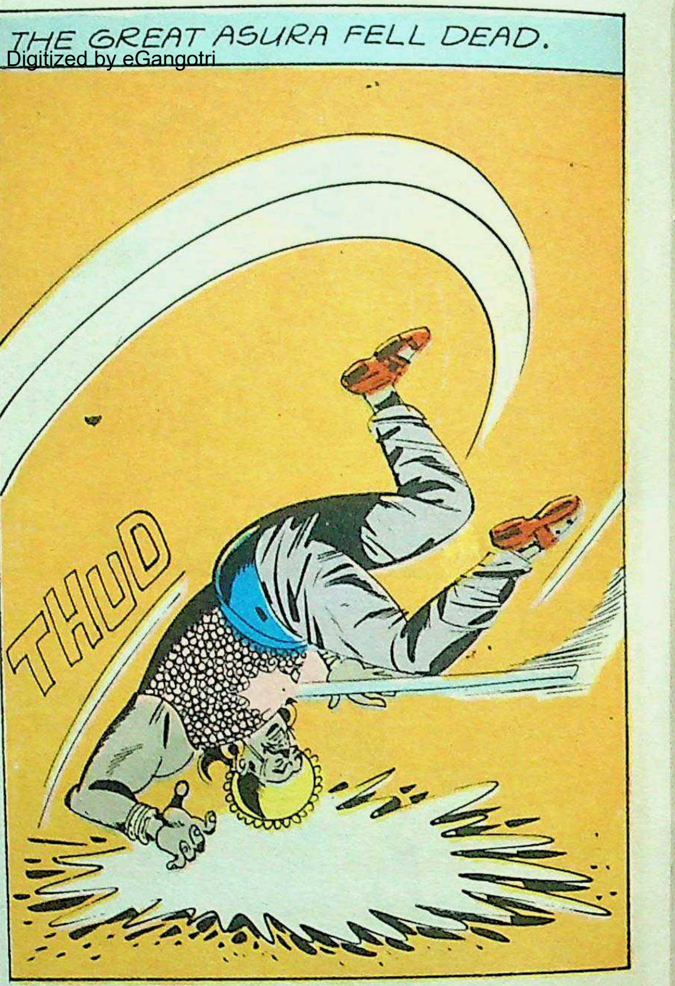

INDRA LOST HEART.
WHAT SHALL I DO? IN SPITE OF BRAHMA'S PROMISE THE DEVAS HAVE DESERTED ME.

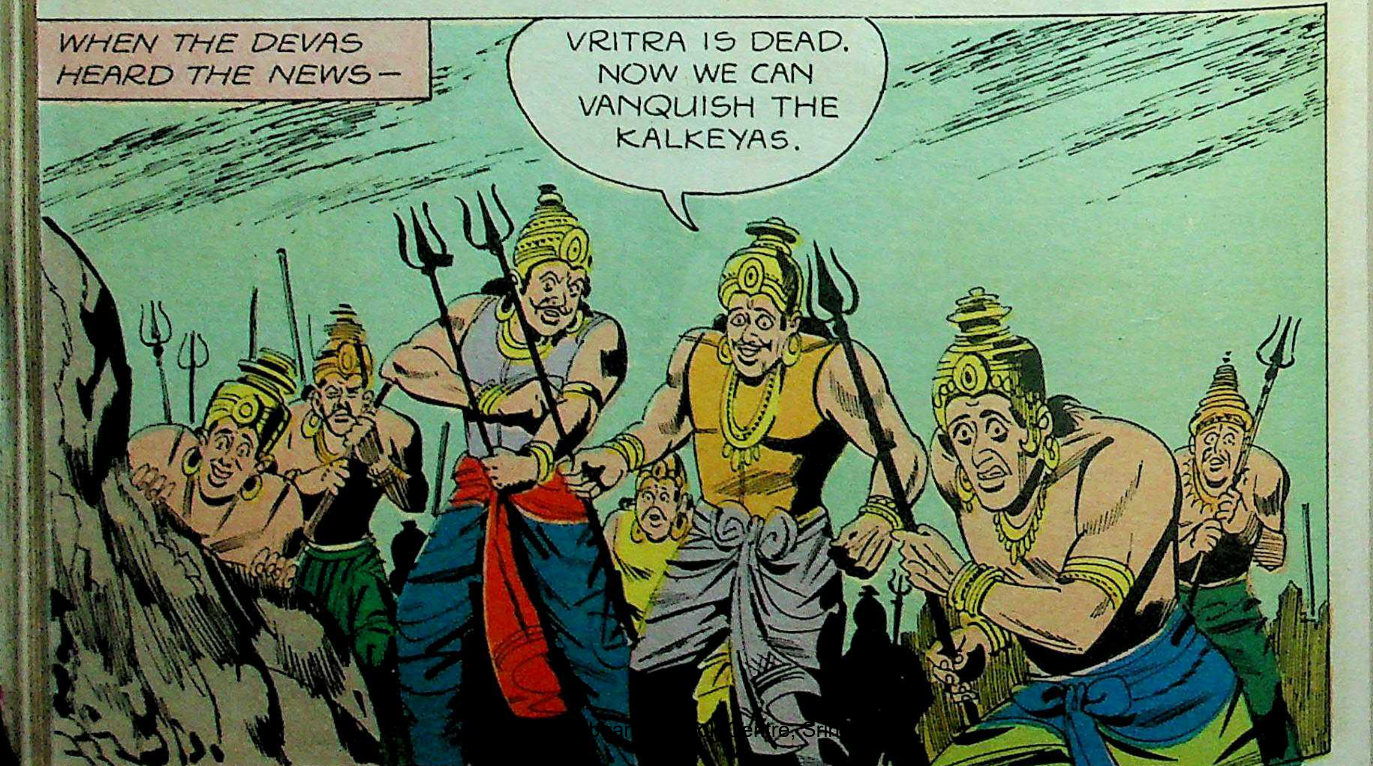

HE TURNED TO VISHNU FOR HELP.
DO NOT FEAR. I SHALL GIVE YOU A PORTION OF MY MIGHT.

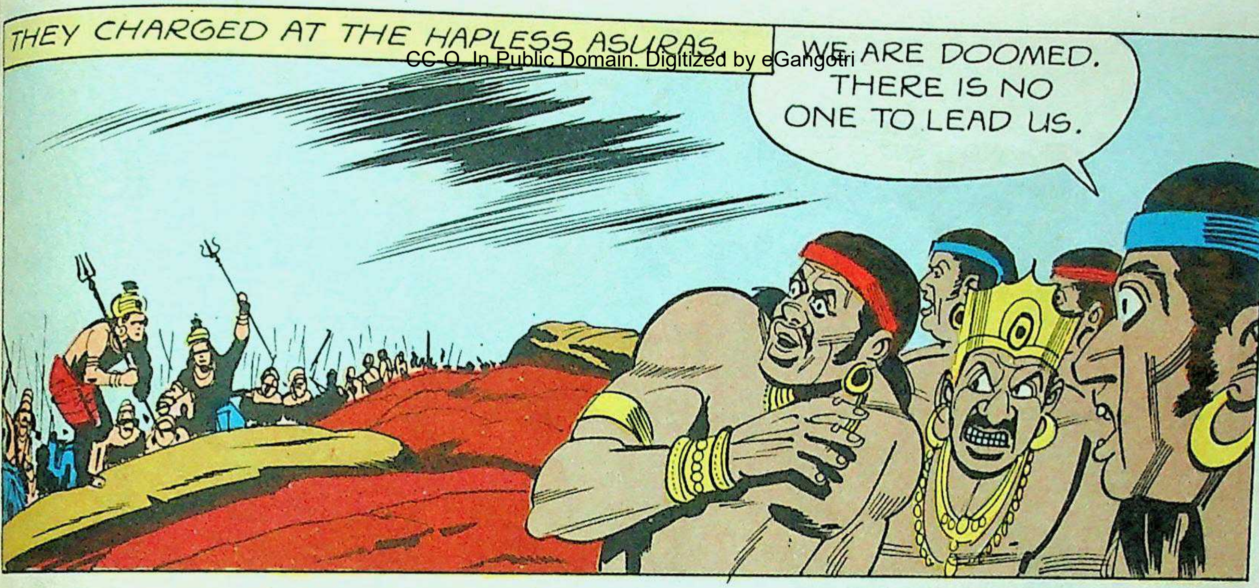

WHEN VRITRA LEARNT OF THE HELP OBTAINED BY INDRA, HE ROARED IN ANGER.
COME, O LEADER OF THE DEVAS. TASTE OF MY MIGHT TOO!

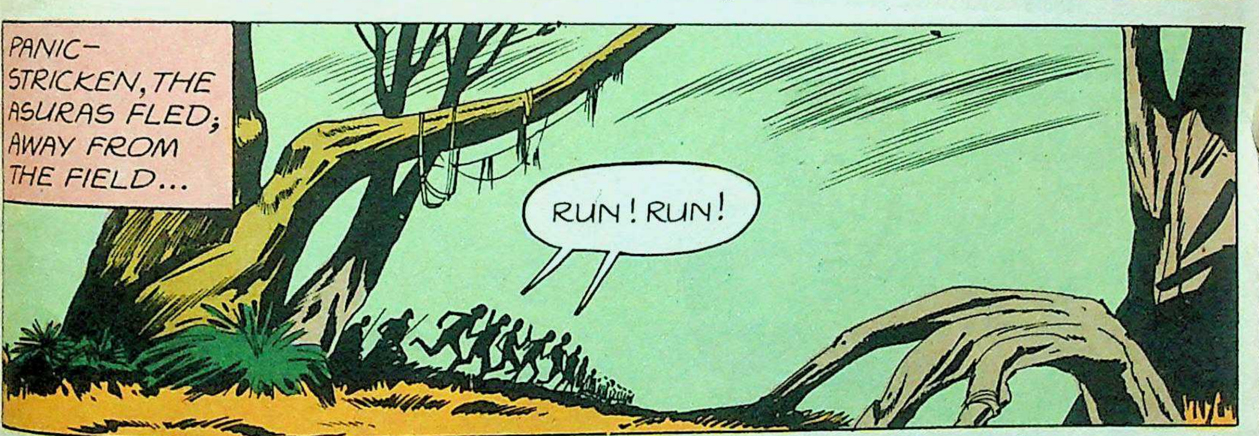

INDRA WITH HIS NEWLY ACQUIRED STRENGTH HURLED THE VAJRA AT HIM.

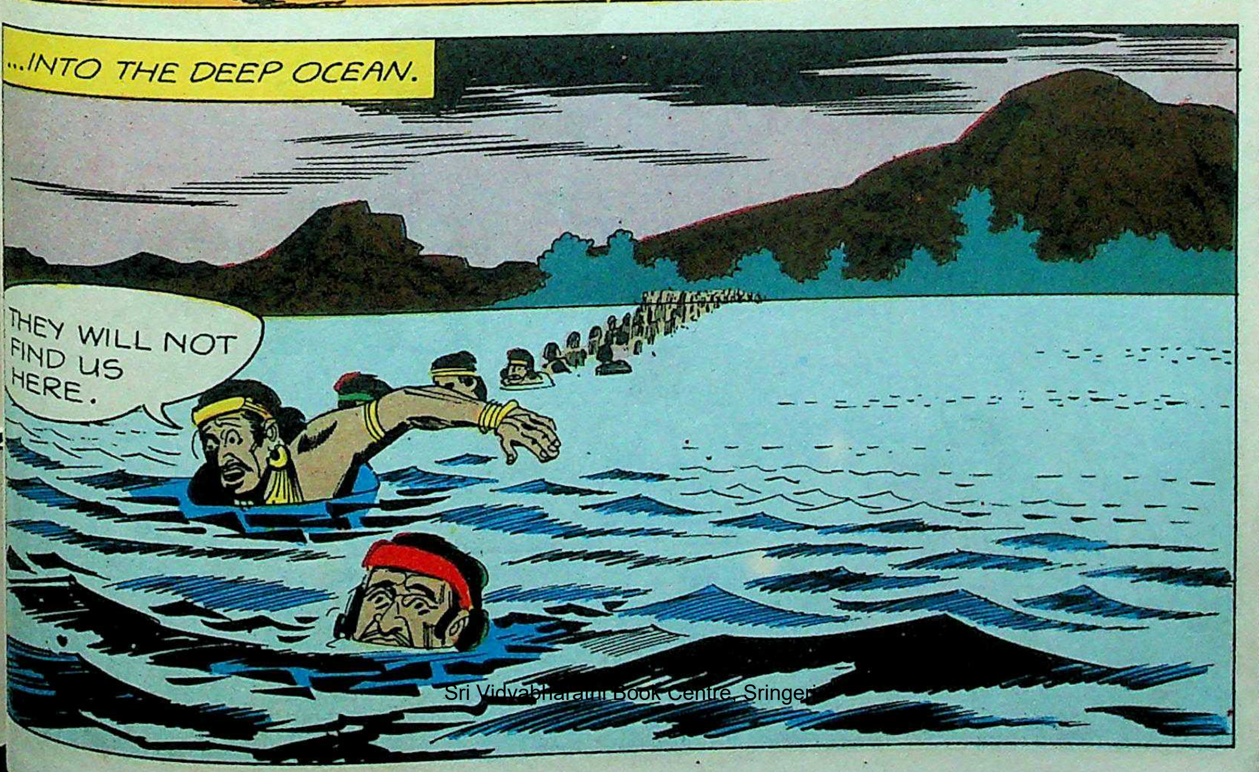

THE VAJRA FOUND ITS MARK
BOOM

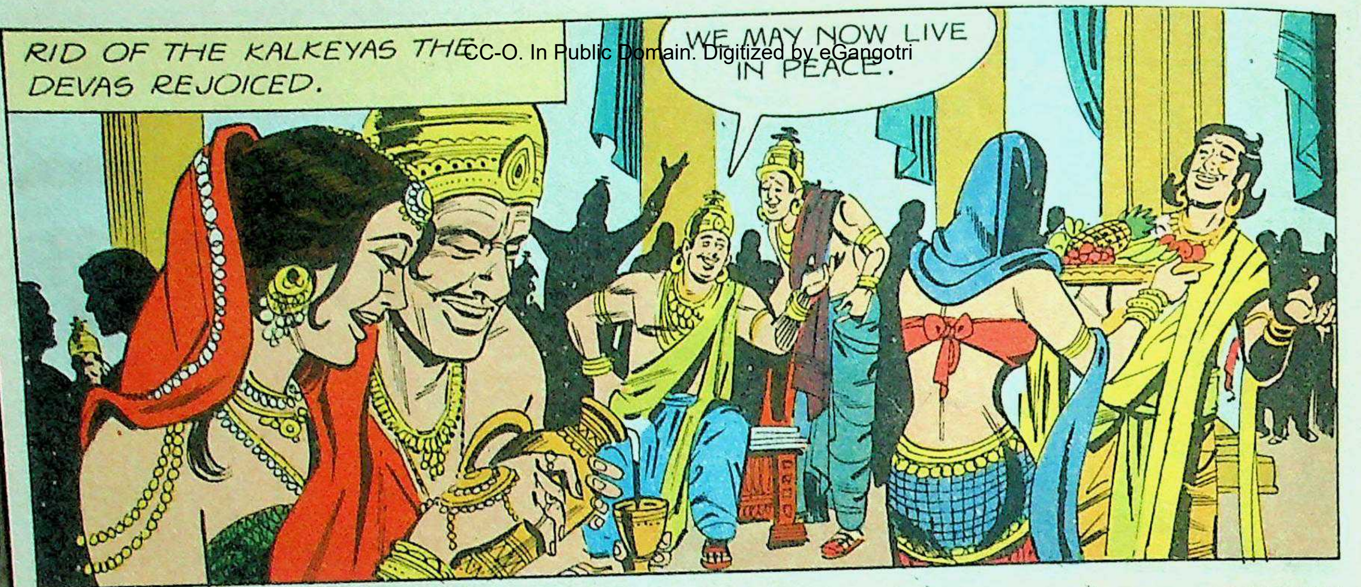

THE GREAT ASURA FELL DEAD.
THUD

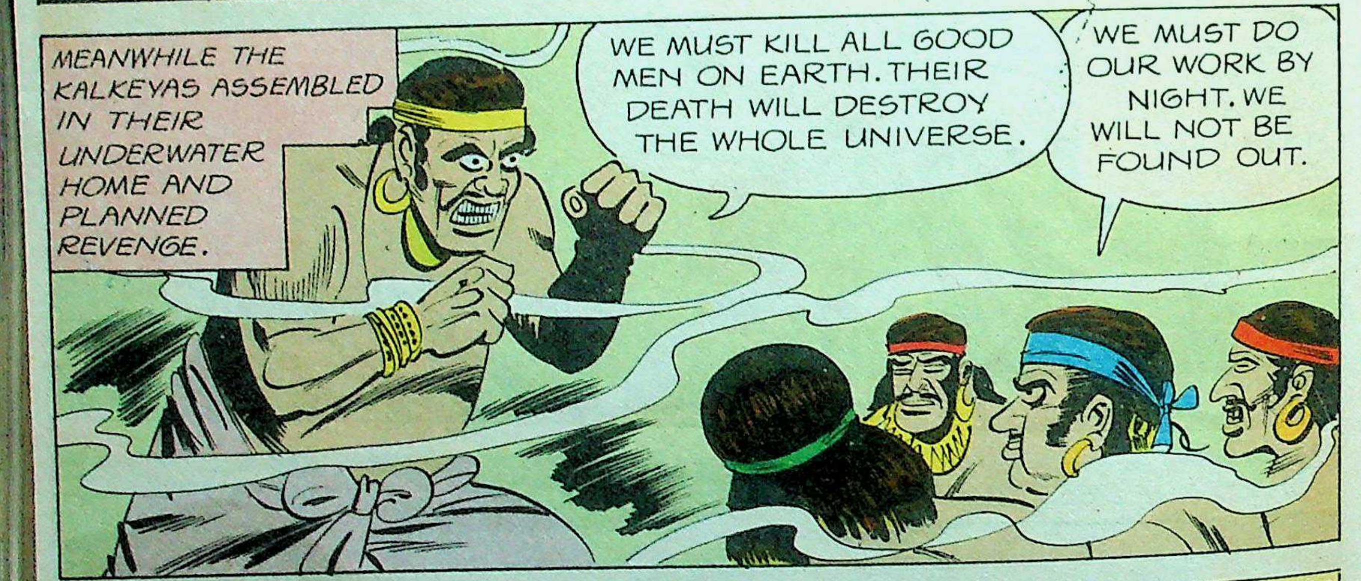

WHEN THE DEVAS HEARD THE NEWS—
VRITRA IS DEAD. NOW WE CAN VANQUISH THE KALKEYAS.

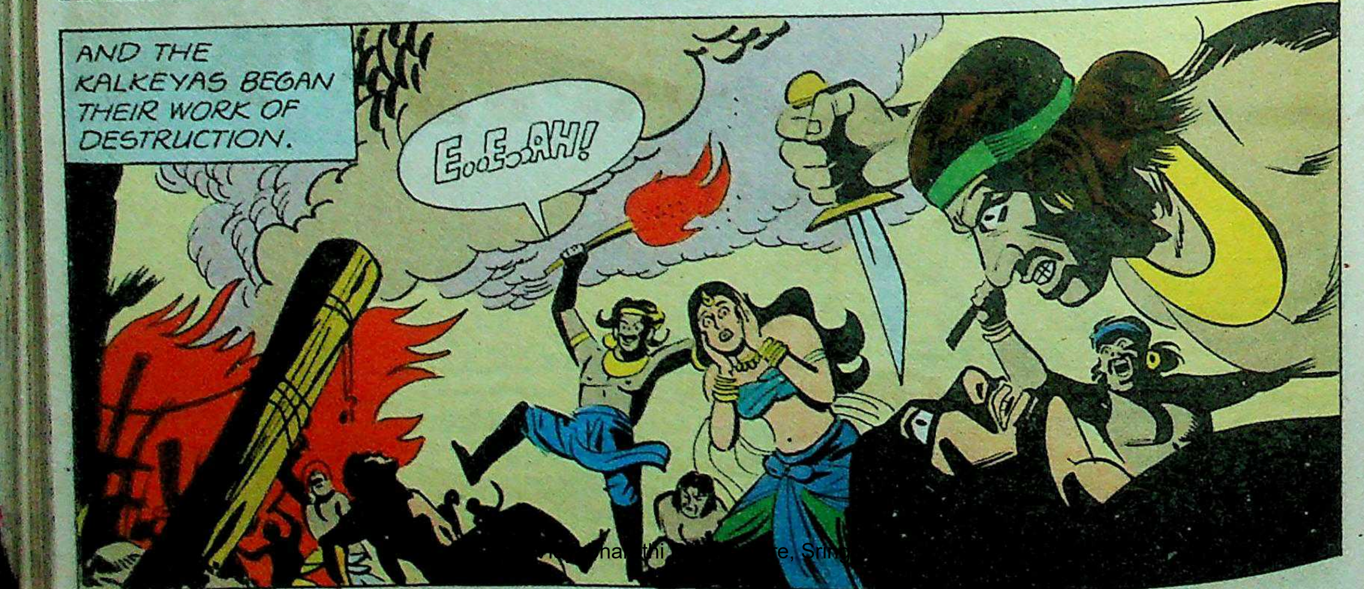

THEY CHARGED AT THE HAPLESS ASURAS.
WE ARE DOOMED. THERE IS NO ONE TO LEAD US.

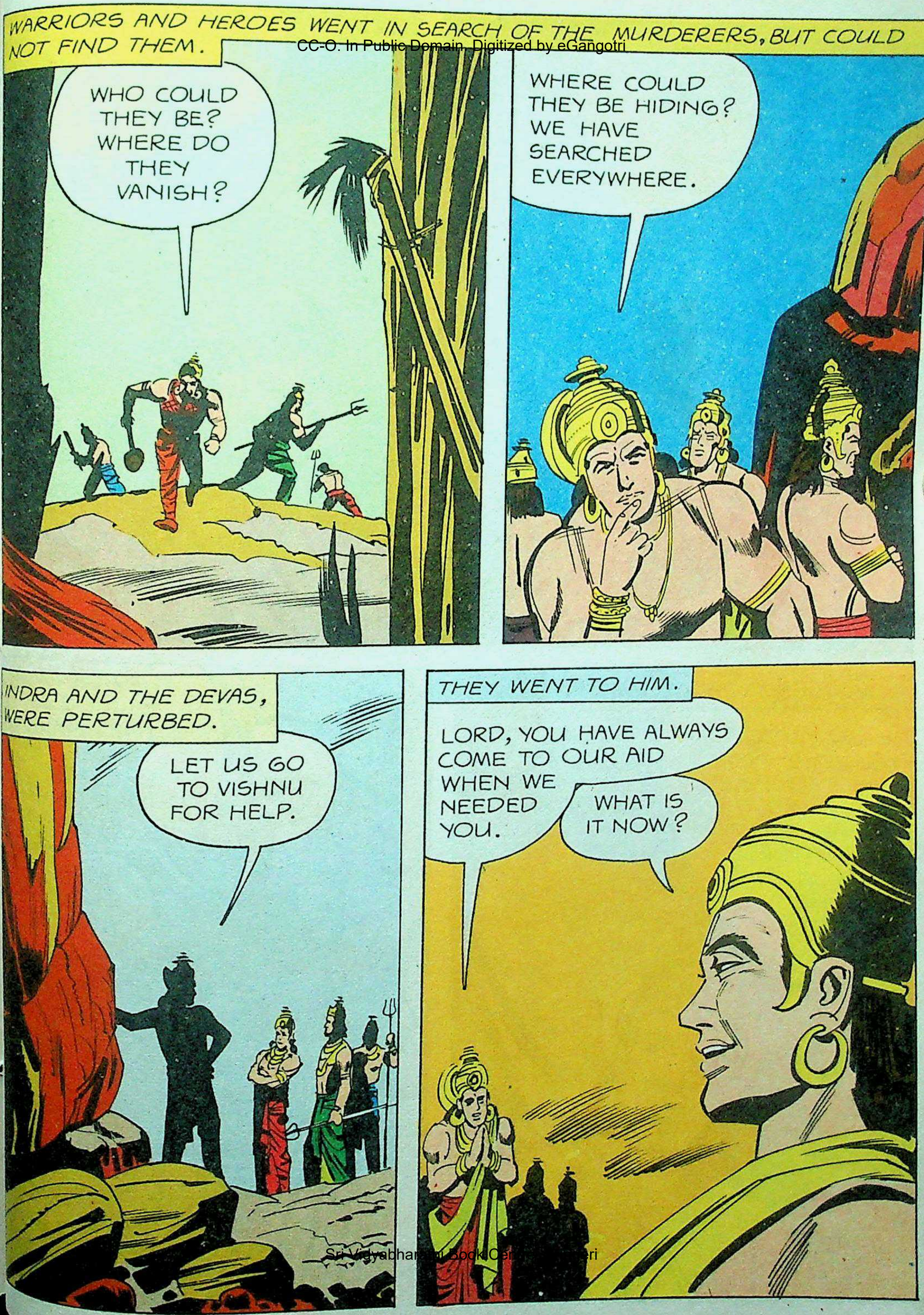

PANIC-STRICKEN, THE ASURAS FLED; AWAY FROM THE FIELD...
RUN! RUN!


...INTO THE DEEP OCEAN.
THEY WILL NOT FIND US HERE.


RID OF THE KALKEYAS THE DEVAS REJOICED.
WE MAY NOW LIVE IN PEACE.


MEANWHILE THE KALKEYAS ASSEMBLED IN THEIR UNDERWATER HOME AND PLANNED REVENGE.
WE MUST KILL ALL GOOD MEN ON EARTH. THEIR DEATH WILL DESTROY THE WHOLE UNIVERSE.
WE MUST DO OUR WORK BY NIGHT. WE WILL NOT BE FOUND OUT.


AND THE KALKEYAS BEGAN THEIR WORK OF DESTRUCTION.
E..E..AH!


WARRIORS AND HEROES WENT IN SEARCH OF THE MURDERERS, BUT COULD NOT FIND THEM.
WHO COULD THEY BE? WHERE DO THEY VANISH?
WHERE COULD THEY BE HIDING? WE HAVE SEARCHED EVERYWHERE.
INDRA AND THE DEVAS, WERE PERTURBED.
LET US GO TO VISHNU FOR HELP.
THEY WENT TO HIM.
LORD, YOU HAVE ALWAYS COME TO OUR AID WHEN WE NEEDED YOU.
WHAT IS IT NOW?

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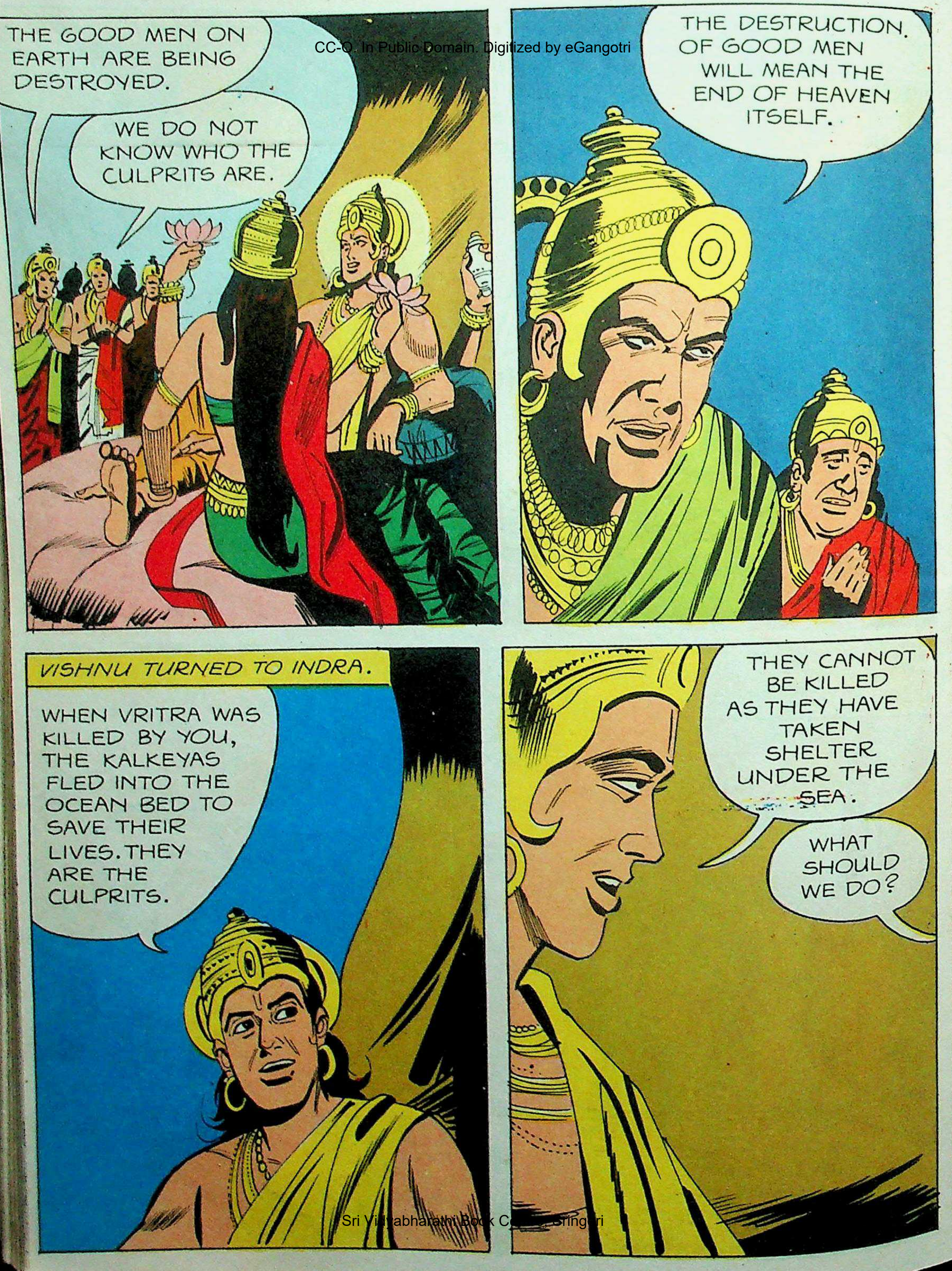
THE GOOD MEN ON EARTH ARE BEING DESTROYED.
WE DO NOT KNOW WHO THE CULPRITS ARE.
THE DESTRUCTION OF GOOD MEN WILL MEAN THE END OF HEAVEN ITSELF.
VISHNU TURNED TO INDRA.
WHEN VRITRA WAS KILLED BY YOU, THE KALKEYAS FLED INTO THE OCEAN BED TO SAVE THEIR LIVES. THEY ARE THE CULPRITS.
THEY CANNOT BE KILLED AS THEY HAVE TAKEN SHELTER UNDER THE SEA.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

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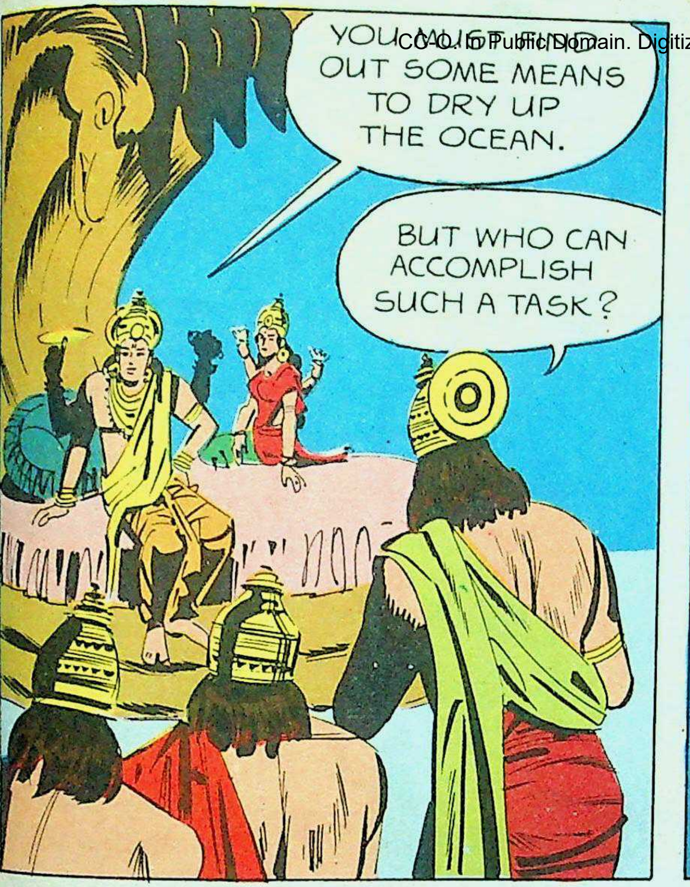
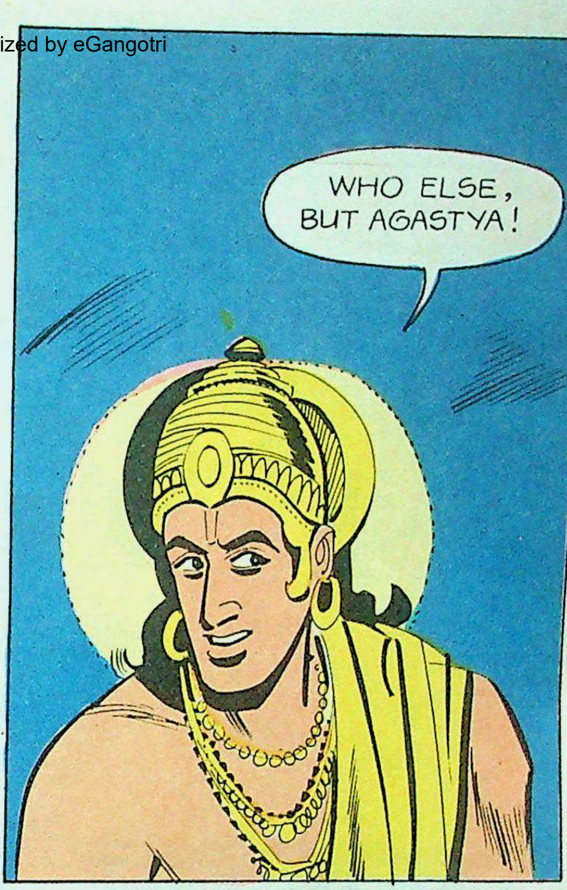
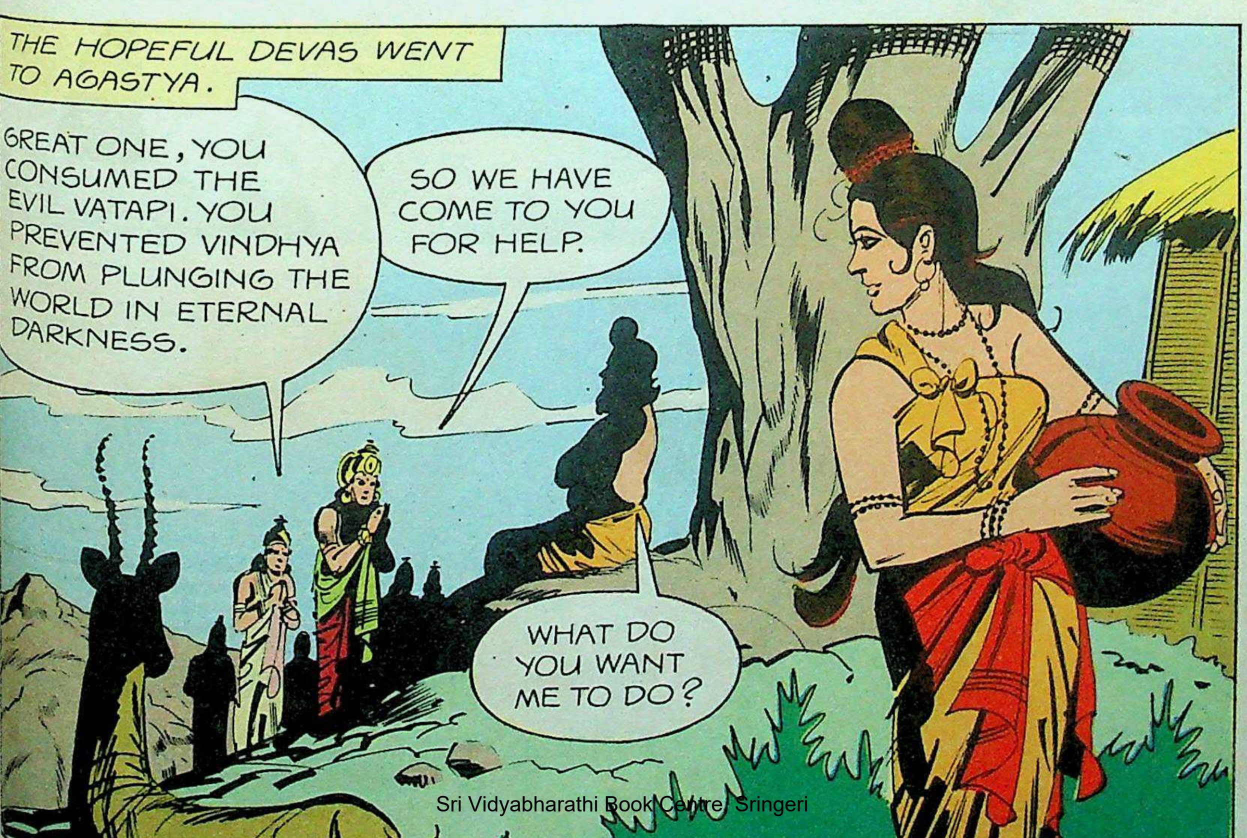
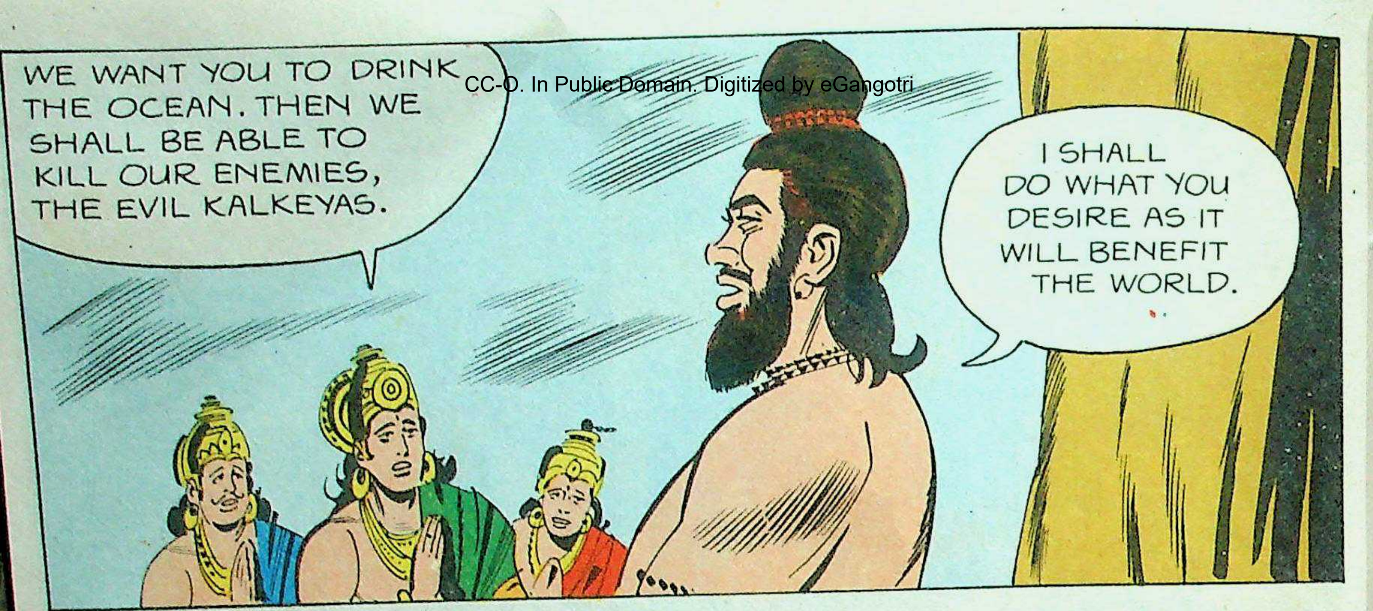
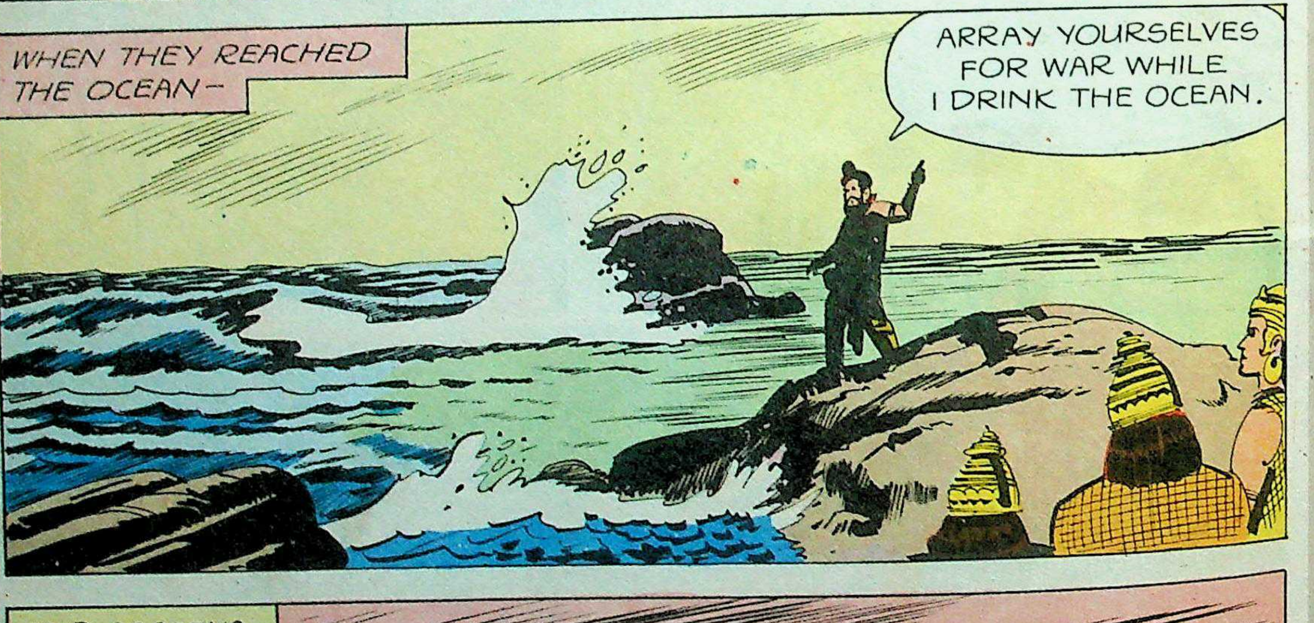
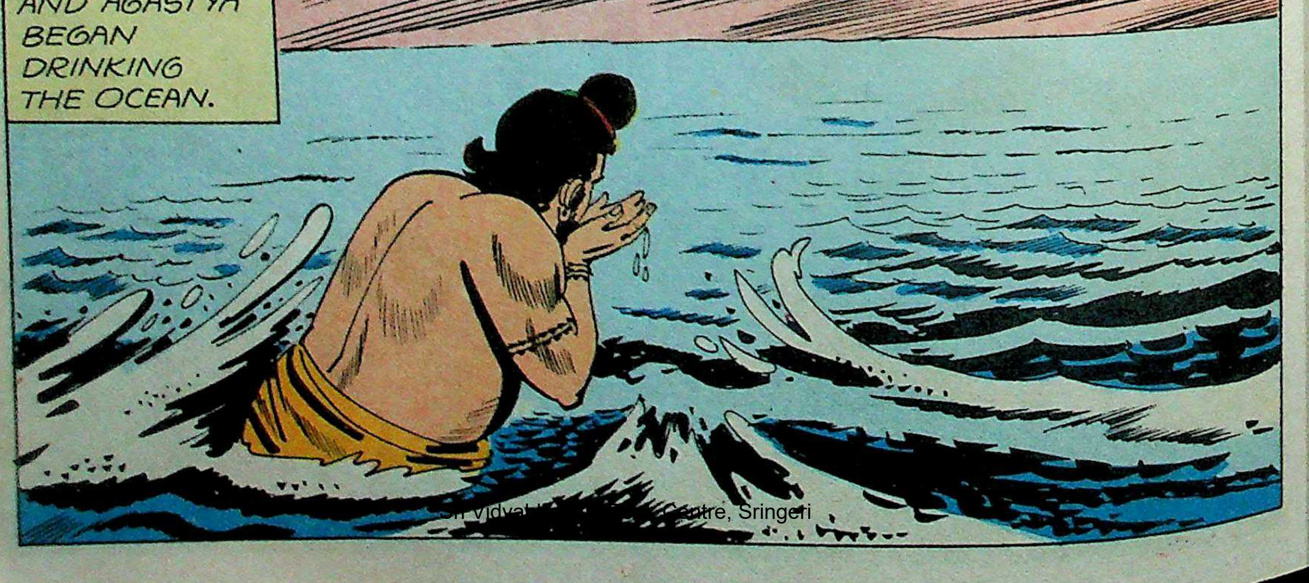

YOU MUST FIND OUT SOME MEANS TO DRY UP THE OCEAN.
BUT WHO CAN ACCOMPLISH SUCH A TASK?


WHO ELSE, BUT AGASTYA!


THE HOPEFUL DEVAS WENT TO AGASTYA.
GREAT ONE, YOU CONSUMED THE EVIL VATAPI. YOU PREVENTED VINDHYA FROM PLUNGING THE WORLD IN ETERNAL DARKNESS.
SO WE HAVE COME TO YOU FOR HELP.
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?


WE WANT YOU TO DRINK THE OCEAN. THEN WE SHALL BE ABLE TO KILL OUR ENEMIES, THE EVIL KALKEYAS.
I SHALL DO WHAT YOU DESIRE AS IT WILL BENEFIT THE WORLD.


WHEN THEY REACHED THE OCEAN—
ARRAY YOURSELVES FOR WAR WHILE I DRINK THE OCEAN.


AND AGASTYA BEGAN DRINKING THE OCEAN.

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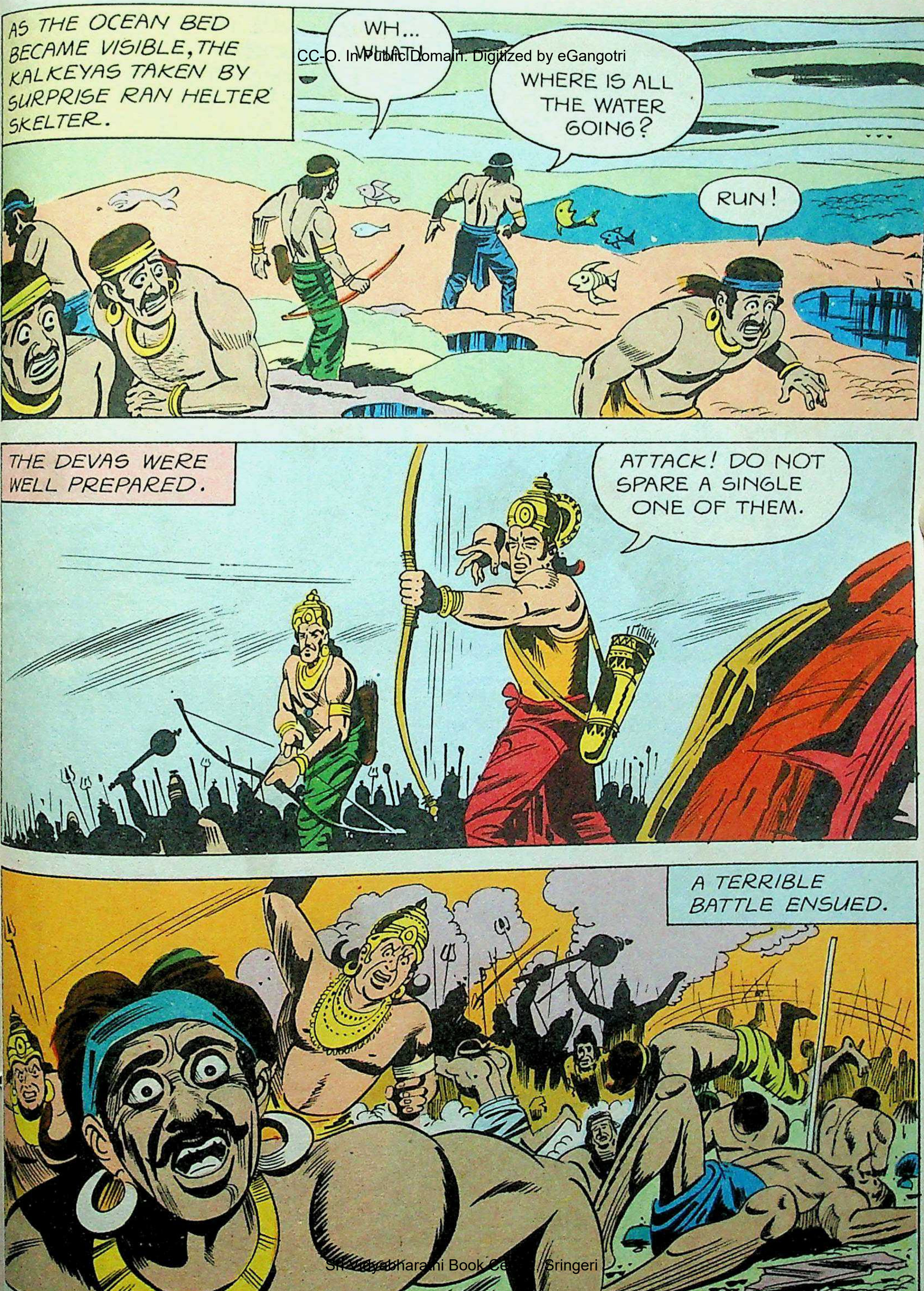
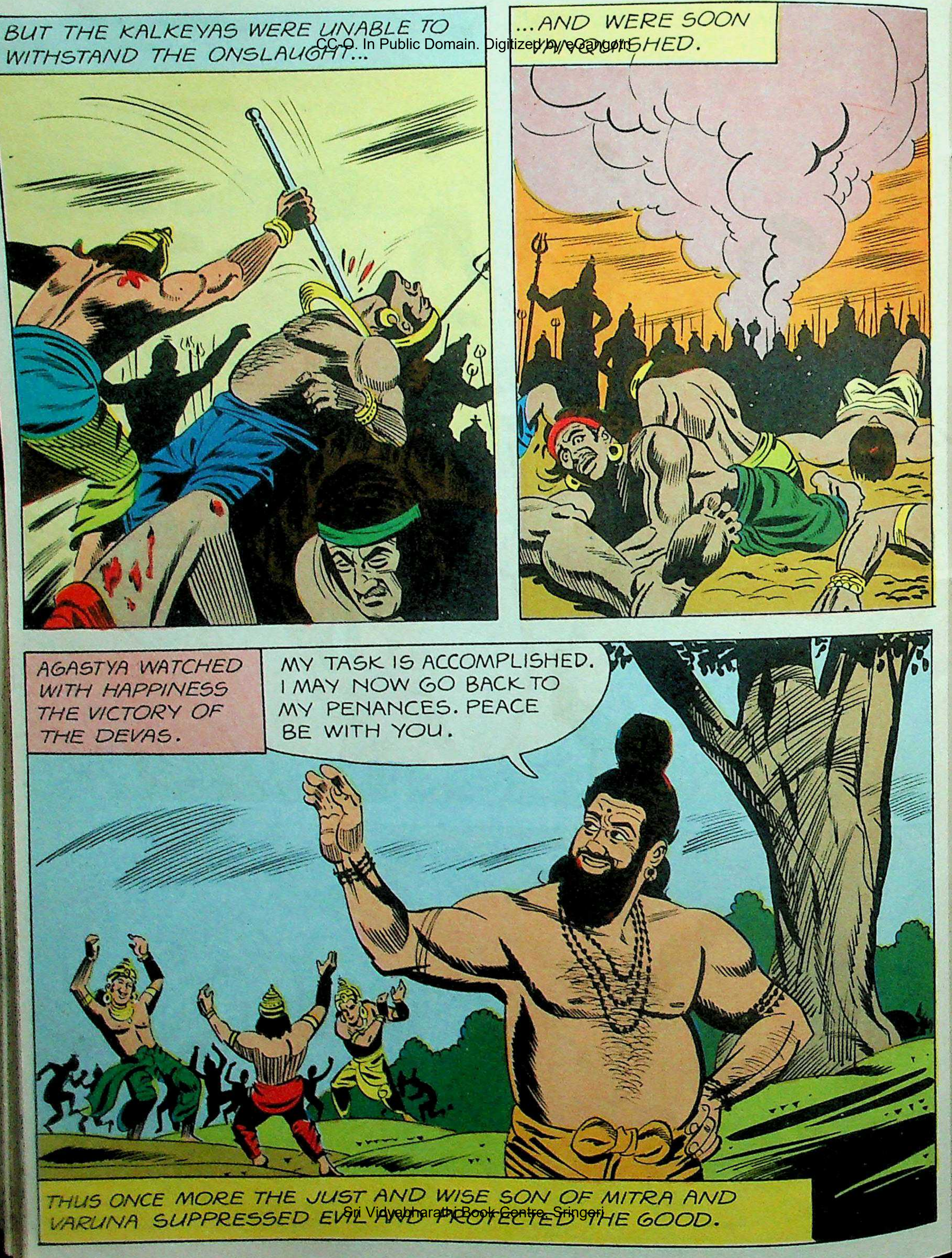
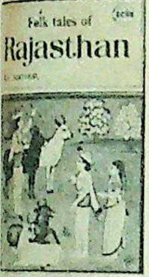

AS THE OCEAN BED BECAME VISIBLE, THE KALKEYAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE RAN HELTER SKELTER.
WH... WHAT!
WHERE IS ALL THE WATER GOING?
RUN!
THE DEVAS WERE WELL PREPARED.
ATTACK! DO NOT SPARE A SINGLE ONE OF THEM.
A TERRIBLE BATTLE ENSUED.


BUT THE KALKEYAS WERE UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE ONSLAUGHT...
...AND WERE SOON VANQUISHED.
AGASTYA WATCHED WITH HAPPINESS THE VICTORY OF THE DEVAS.
MY TASK IS ACCOMPLISHED. I MAY NOW GO BACK TO MY PENANCES. PEACE BE WITH YOU.
THUS ONCE MORE THE JUST AND WISE SON OF MITRA AND VARUNA SUPPRESSED EVIL AND PROTECTED THE GOOD.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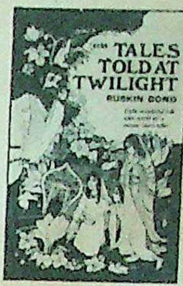
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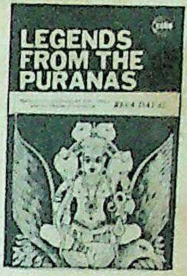
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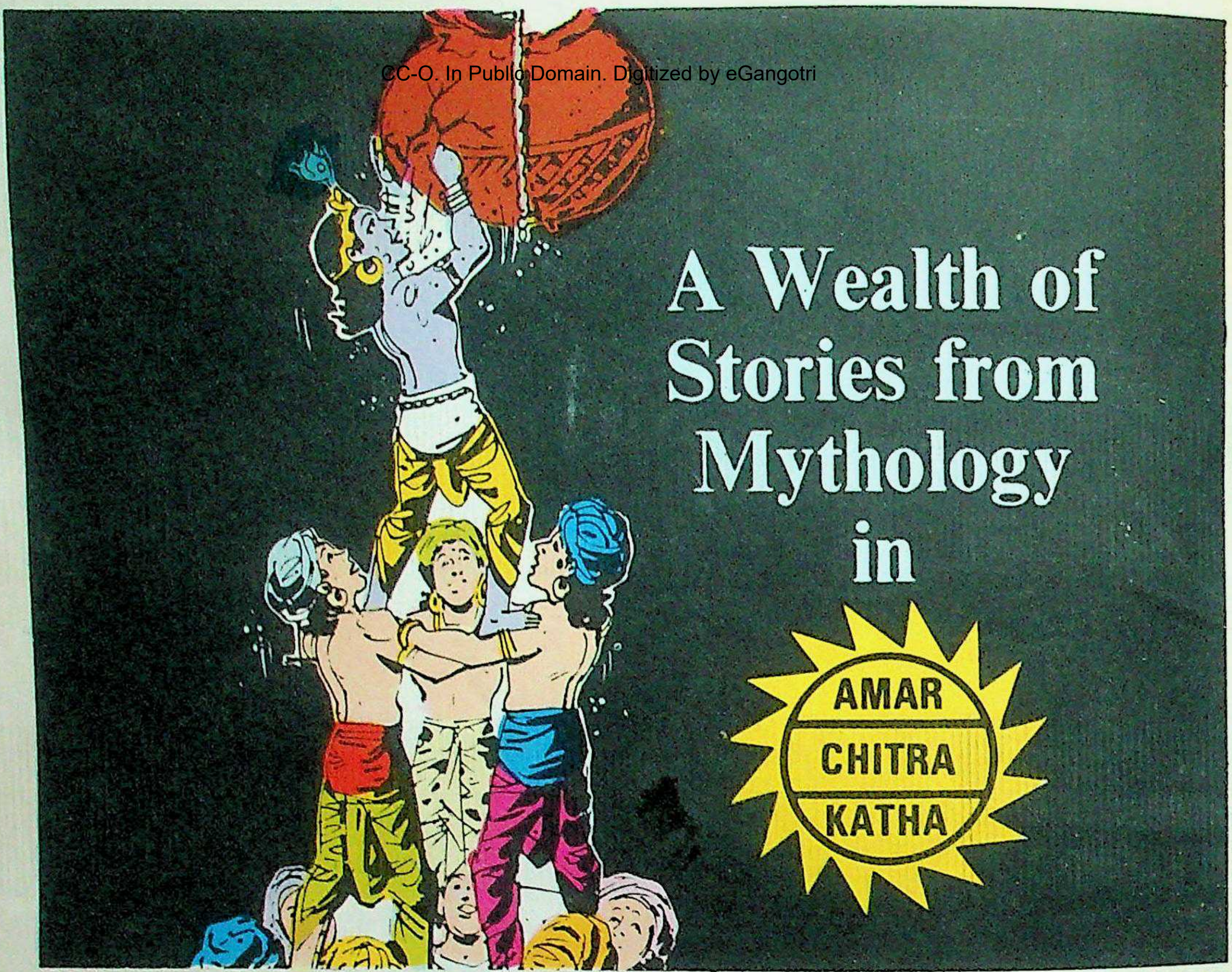

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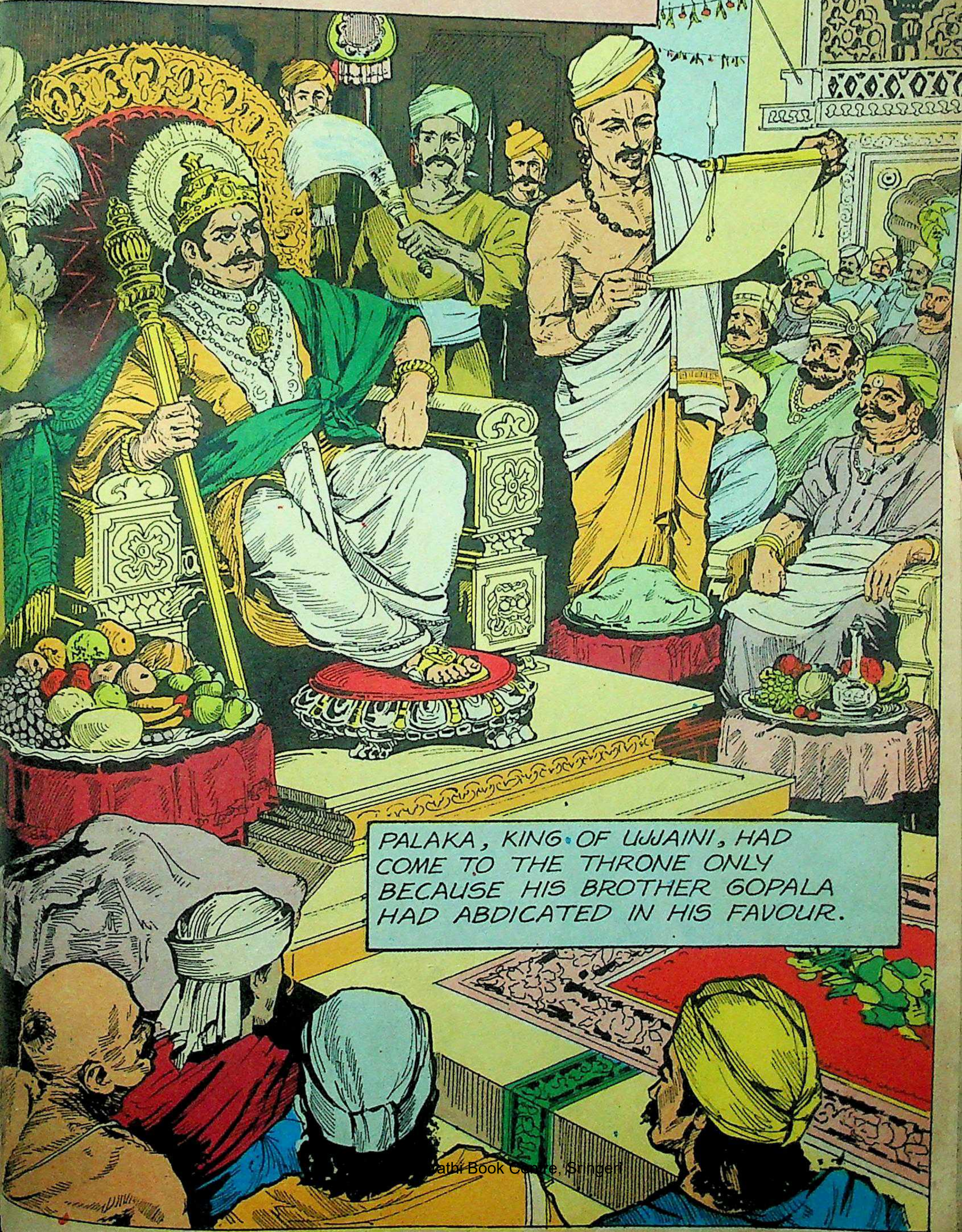
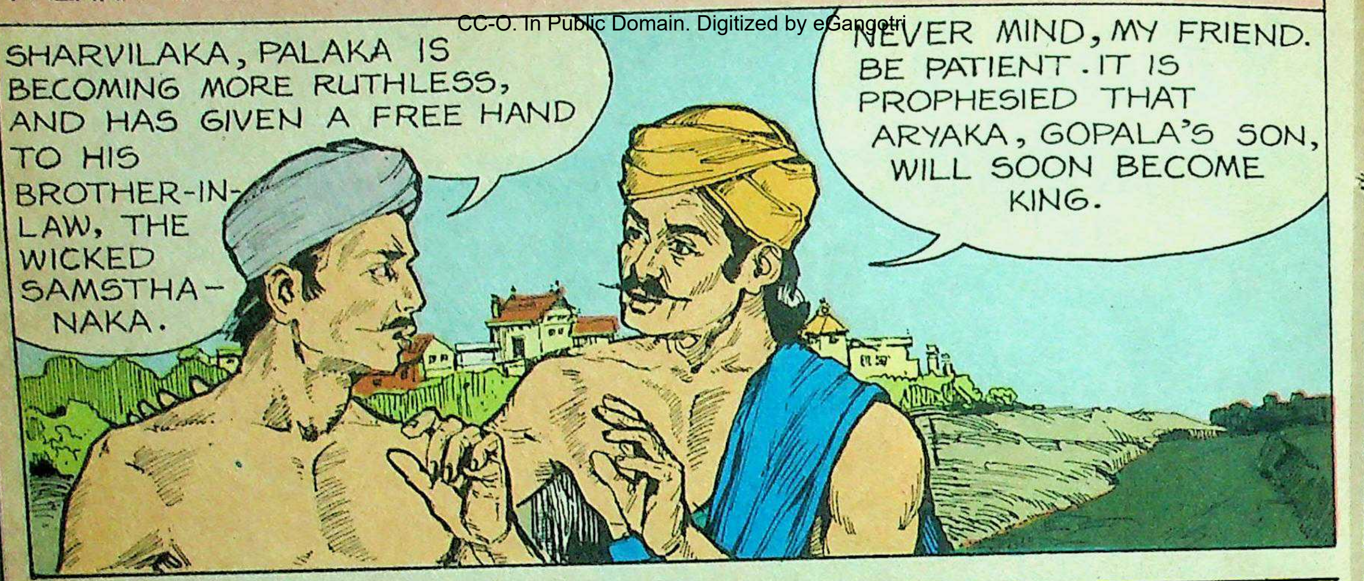
VASANTASENA

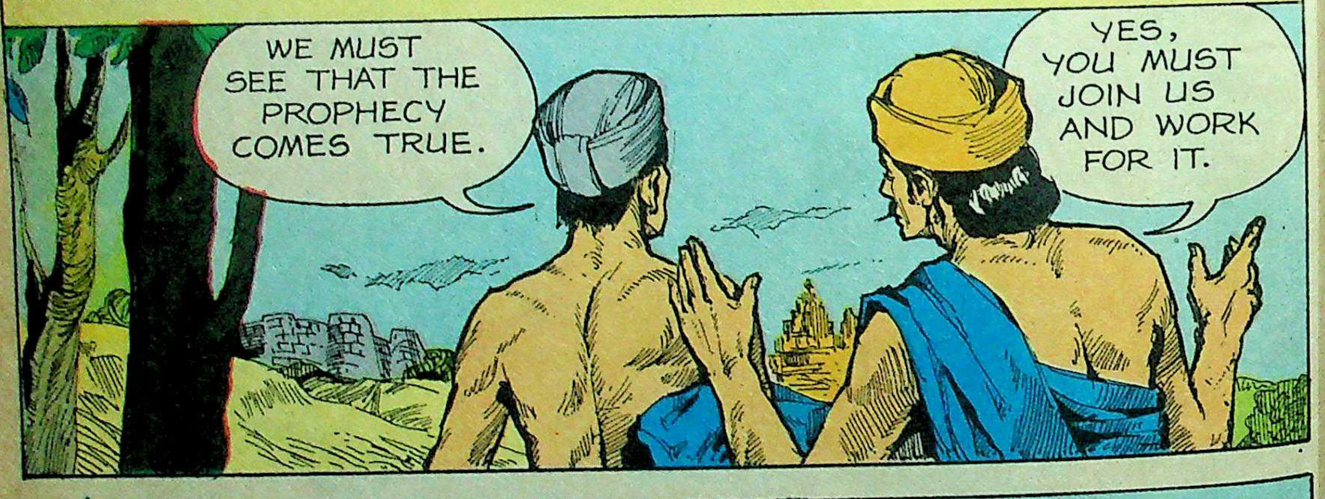

PALAKA, KING OF UJJAINI, HAD COME TO THE THRONE ONLY BECAUSE HIS BROTHER GOPALA HAD ABDICATED IN HIS FAVOUR.

athi Book Co[illegible]e, Sringeri

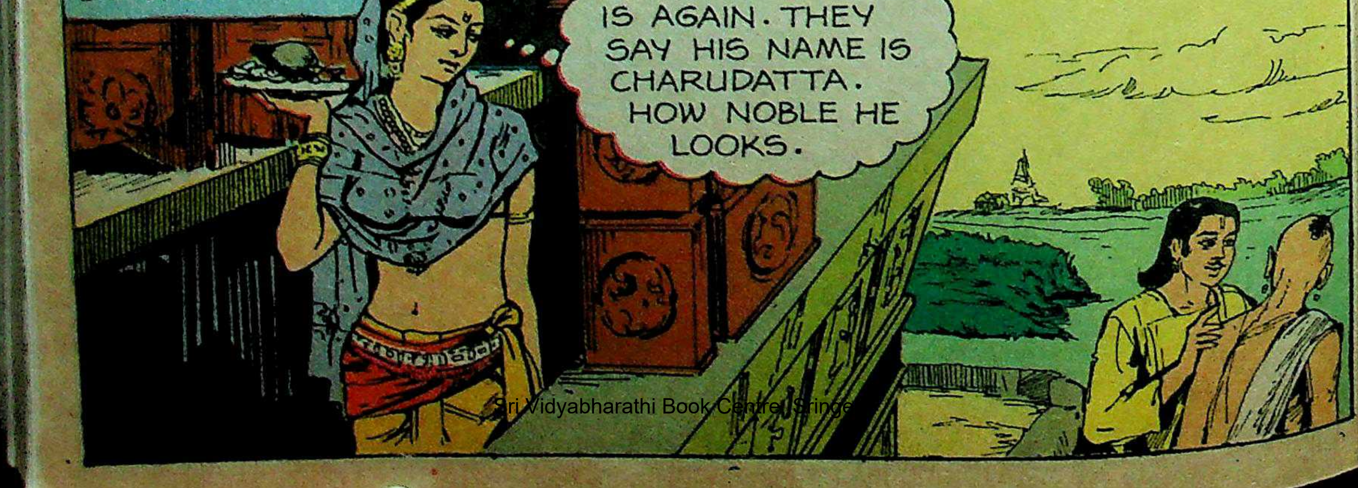
PALAKA WAS A TYRANT. MOST OF HIS SUBJECTS HATED HIM.

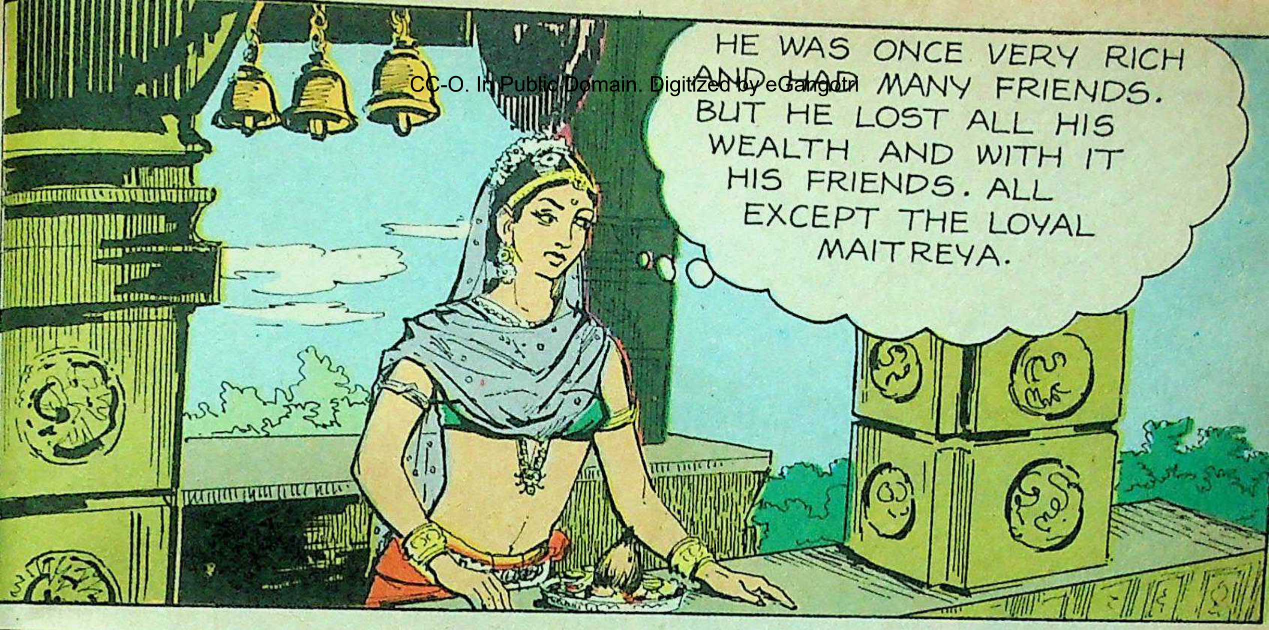

SHARVILAKA, PALAKA IS BECOMING MORE RUTHLESS, AND HAS GIVEN A FREE HAND TO HIS BROTHER-IN-LAW, THE WICKED SAMSTHANAKA.
NEVER MIND, MY FRIEND. BE PATIENT. IT IS PROPHESIED THAT ARYAKA, GOPALA'S SON, WILL SOON BECOME KING.

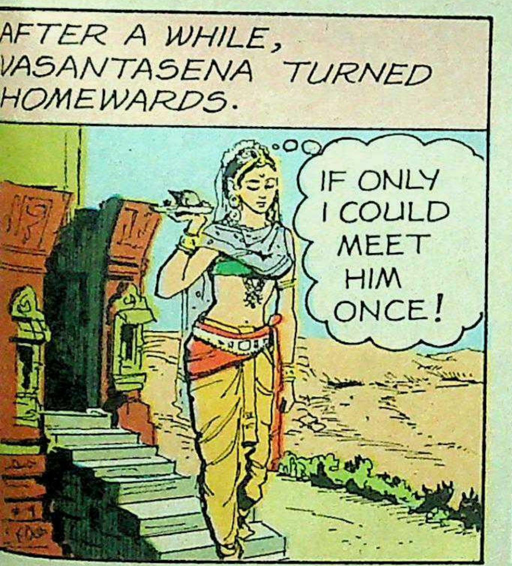
SHARVILAKA WAS A LEADER OF ARYAKA'S SUPPORTERS.

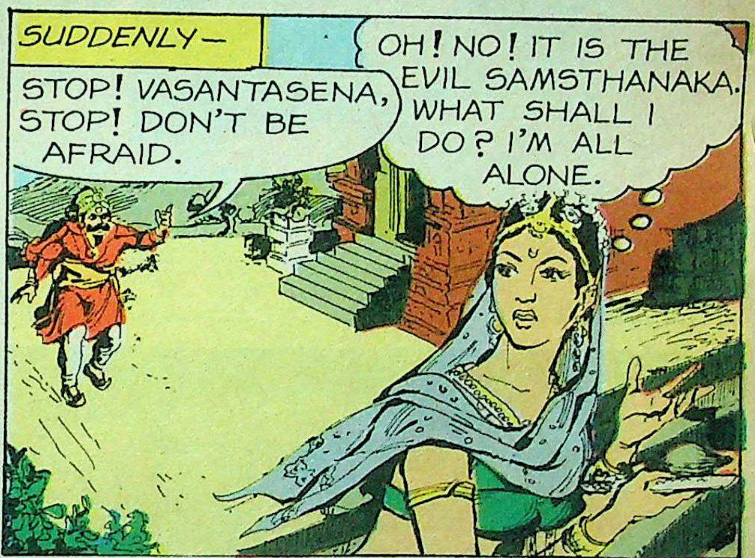

WE MUST SEE THAT THE PROPHECY COMES TRUE.
YES, YOU MUST JOIN US AND WORK FOR IT.

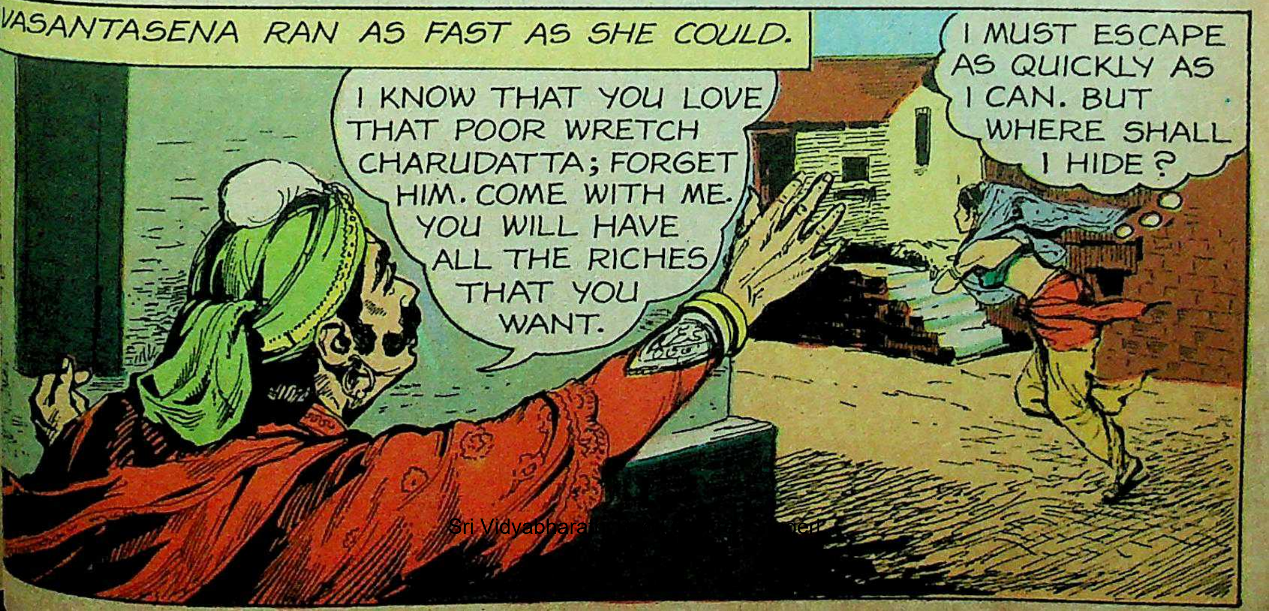
IN THAT SAME TOWN LIVED VASANTASENA A BEAUTIFUL, WEALTHY DANCER WHO OFTEN WENT TO THE TEMPLE OF KAMADEVA NEAR BY. ONE DAY –

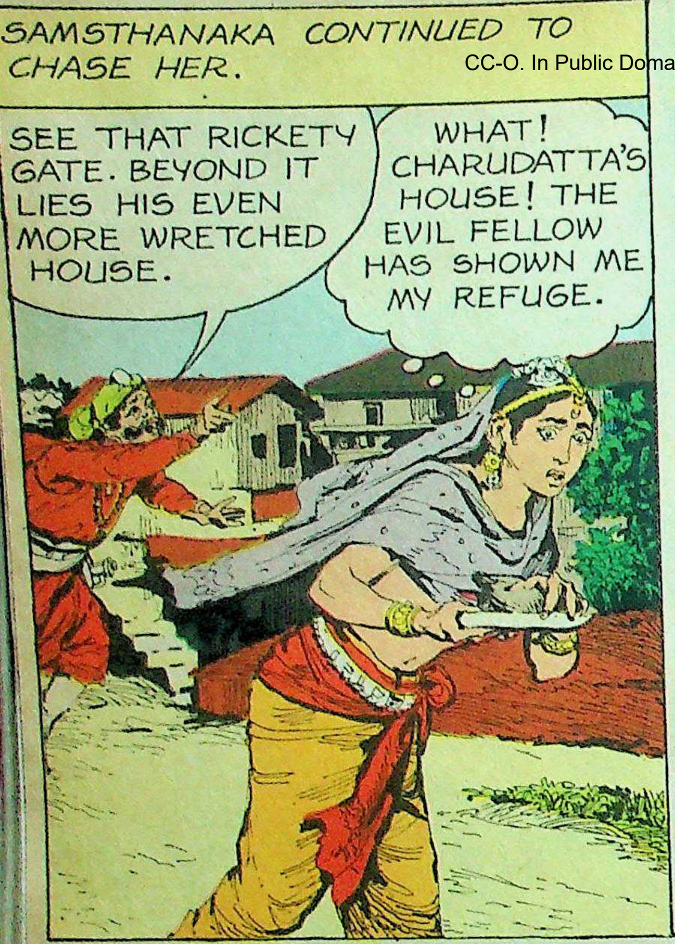

AH! THERE HE IS AGAIN. THEY SAY HIS NAME IS CHARUDATTA. HOW NOBLE HE LOOKS.

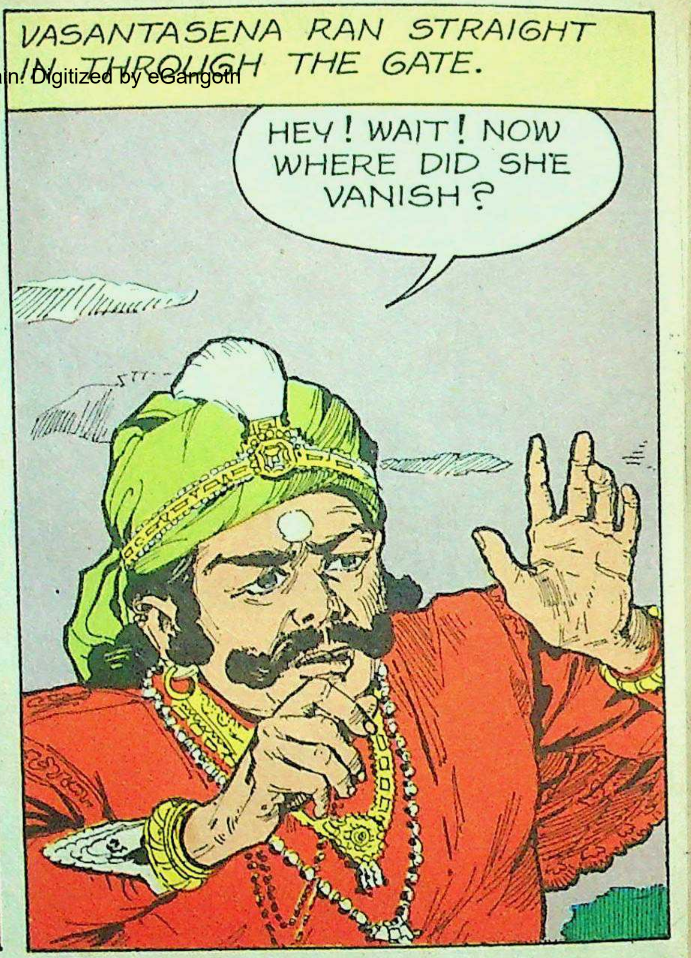

HE WAS ONCE VERY RICH AND HAD MANY FRIENDS. BUT HE LOST ALL HIS WEALTH AND WITH IT HIS FRIENDS. ALL EXCEPT THE LOYAL MAITREYA.

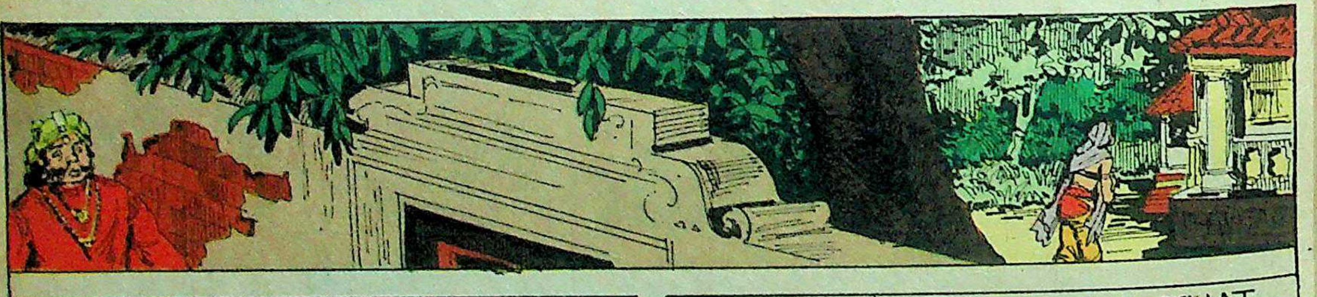

AFTER A WHILE, VASANTASENA TURNED HOMEWARDS.
IF ONLY I COULD MEET HIM ONCE!

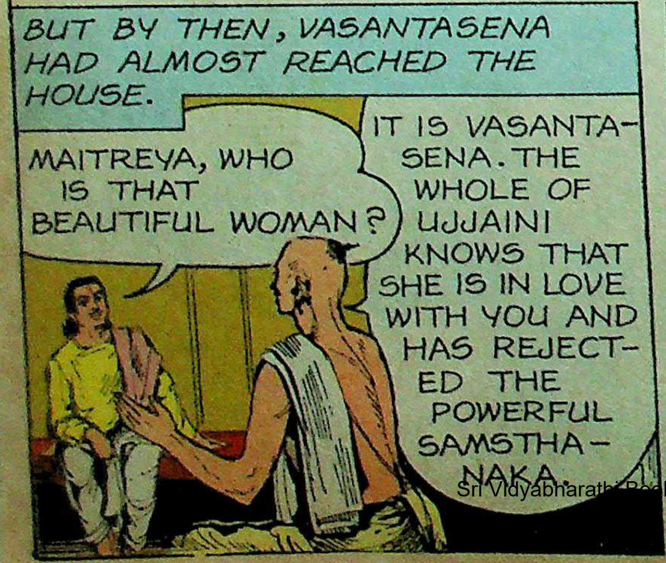

SUDDENLY—
STOP! VASANTASENA, STOP! DON'T BE AFRAID.
OH! NO! IT IS THE EVIL SAMSTHANAKA. WHAT SHALL I DO? I'M ALL ALONE.

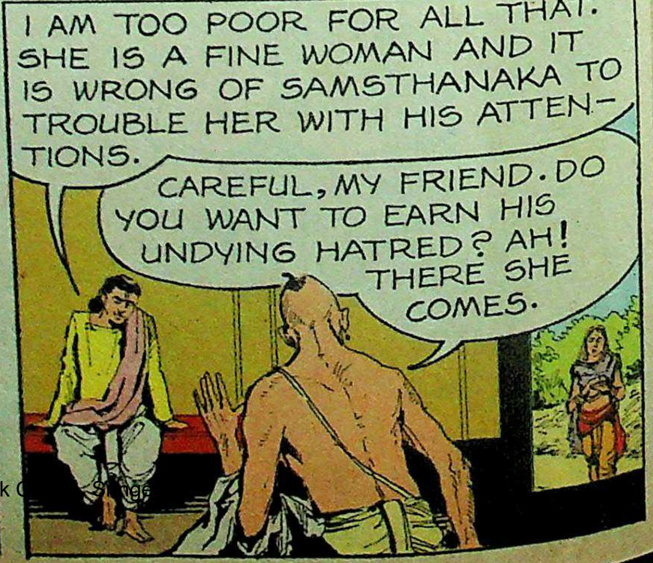

VASANTASENA RAN AS FAST AS SHE COULD.
I KNOW THAT YOU LOVE THAT POOR WRETCH CHARUDATTA; FORGET HIM. COME WITH ME. YOU WILL HAVE ALL THE RICHES THAT YOU WANT.
I MUST ESCAPE AS QUICKLY AS I CAN. BUT WHERE SHALL I HIDE?

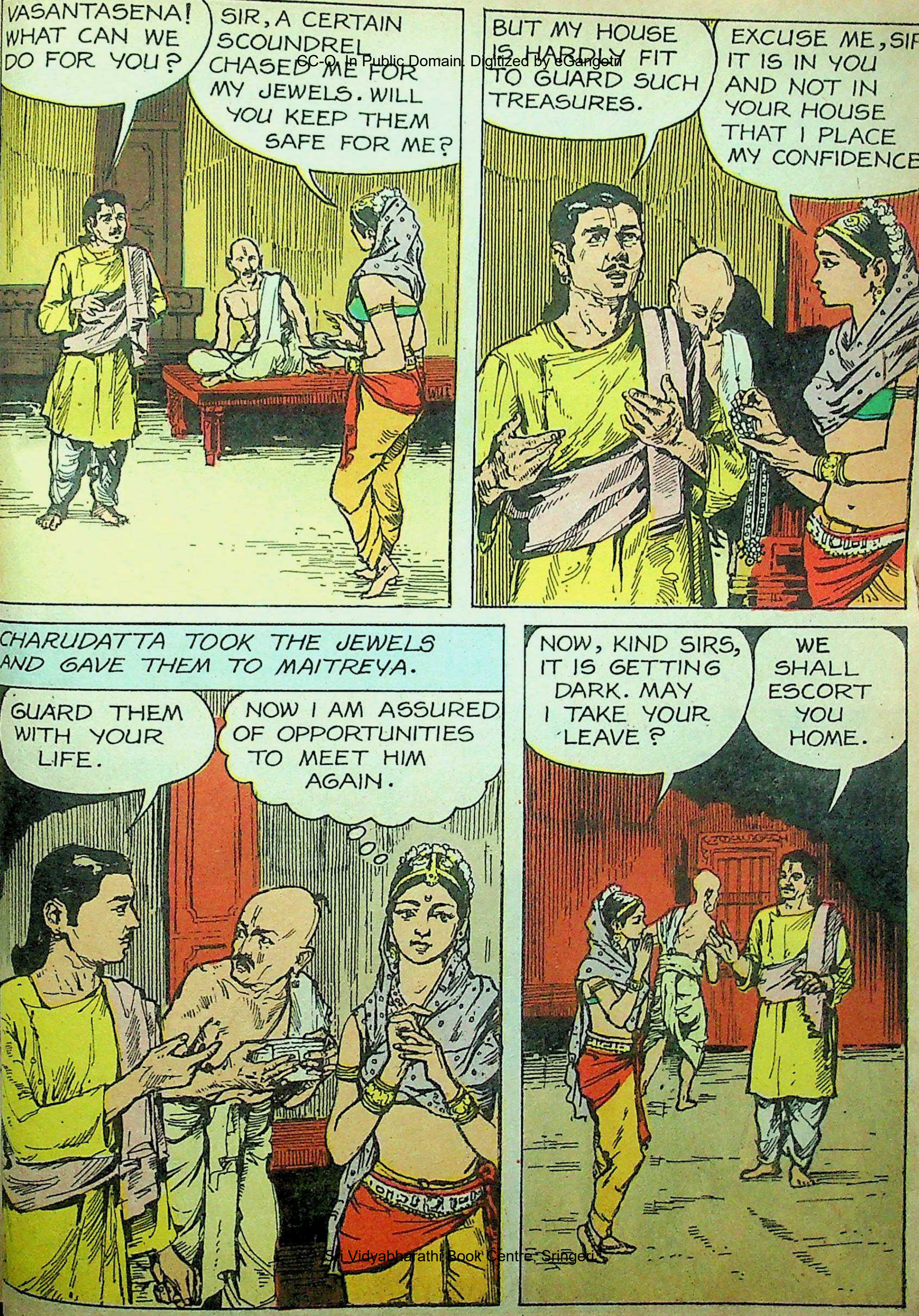

SAMSTHANAKA CONTINUED TO CHASE HER.
SEE THAT RICKETY GATE. BEYOND IT LIES HIS EVEN MORE WRETCHED HOUSE.
WHAT! CHARUDATTA'S HOUSE! THE EVIL FELLOW HAS SHOWN ME MY REFUGE.

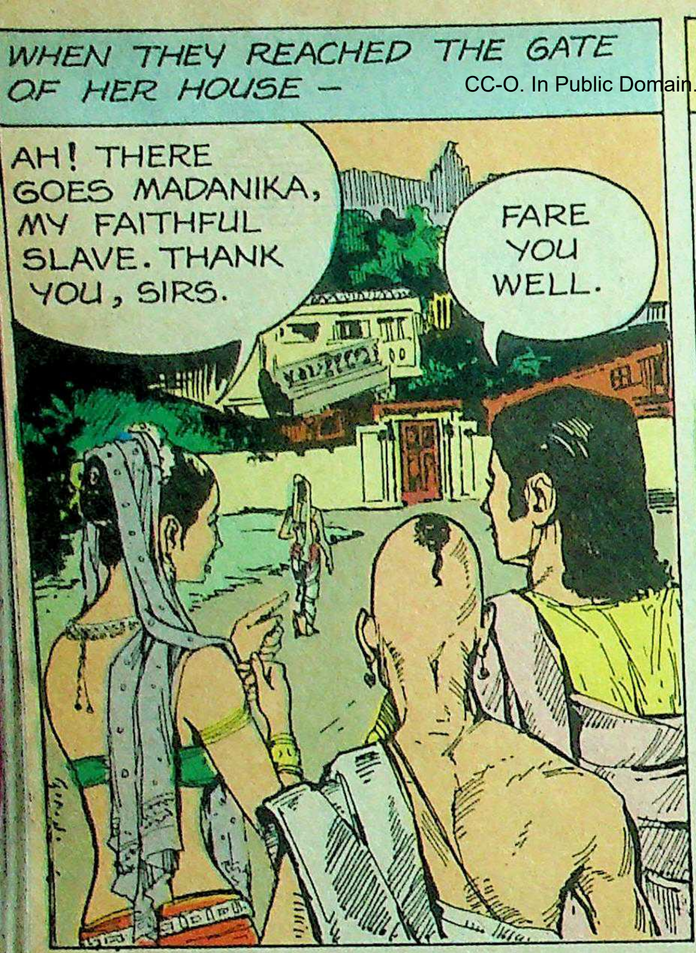

VASANTASENA RAN STRAIGHT IN THROUGH THE GATE.
HEY! WAIT! NOW WHERE DID SHE VANISH?

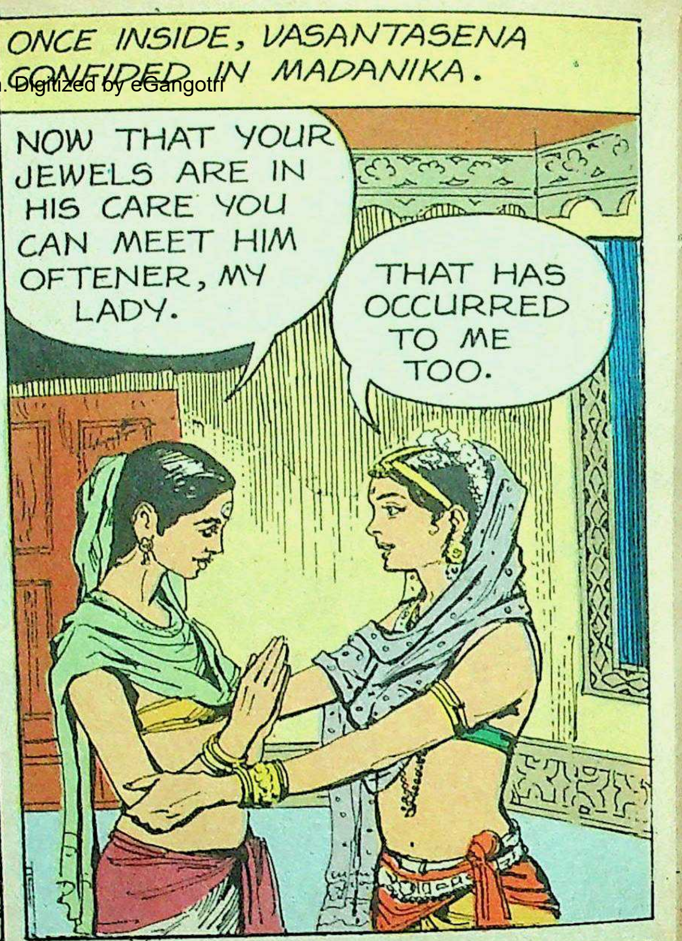


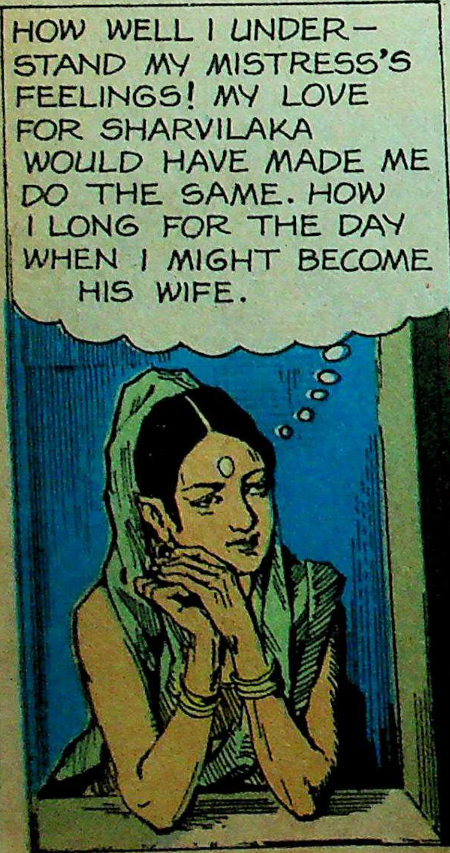

BUT BY THEN, VASANTASENA HAD ALMOST REACHED THE HOUSE.
MAITREYA, WHO IS THAT BEAUTIFUL WOMAN?
IT IS VASANTASENA. THE WHOLE OF UJJAINI KNOWS THAT SHE IS IN LOVE WITH YOU AND HAS REJECTED THE POWERFUL SAMSTHANAKA.

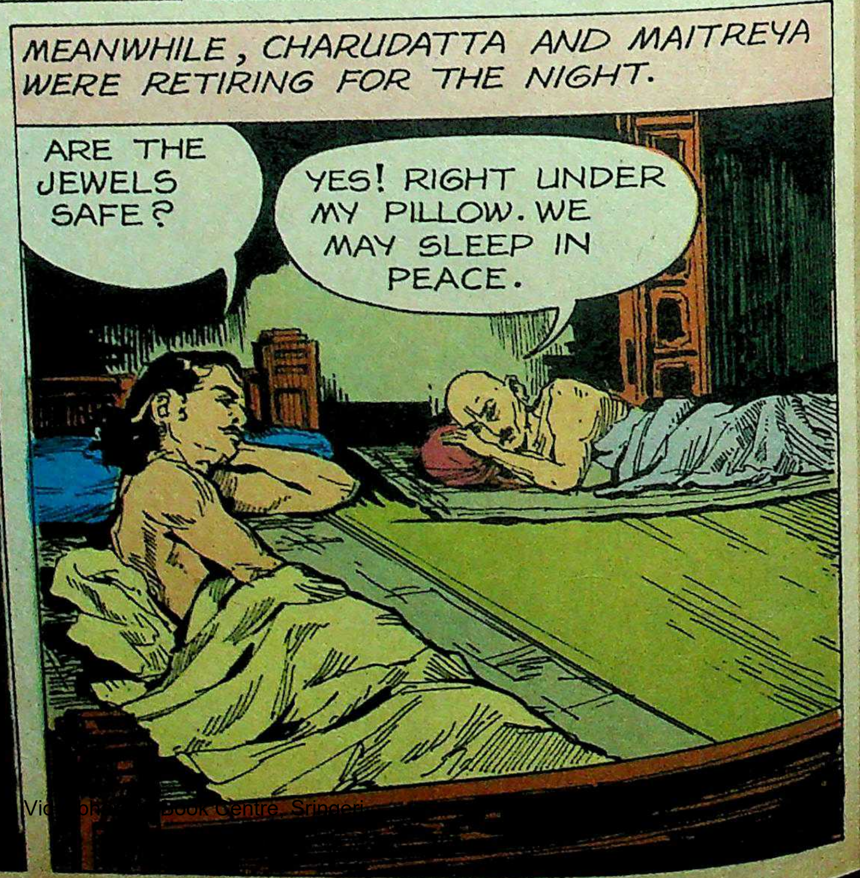

I AM TOO POOR FOR ALL THAT. SHE IS A FINE WOMAN AND IT IS WRONG OF SAMSTHANAKA TO TROUBLE HER WITH HIS ATTENTIONS.
CAREFUL, MY FRIEND. DO YOU WANT TO EARN HIS UNDYING HATRED? AH! THERE SHE COMES.


VASANTASENA! WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?
SIR, A CERTAIN SCOUNDREL CHASED ME FOR MY JEWELS. WILL YOU KEEP THEM SAFE FOR ME?
BUT MY HOUSE IS HARDLY FIT TO GUARD SUCH TREASURES.
EXCUSE ME, SIR IT IS IN YOU AND NOT IN YOUR HOUSE THAT I PLACE MY CONFIDENCE
CHARUDATTA TOOK THE JEWELS AND GAVE THEM TO MAITREYA.
GUARD THEM WITH YOUR LIFE.
NOW I AM ASSURED OF OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET HIM AGAIN.
NOW, KIND SIRS, IT IS GETTING DARK. MAY I TAKE YOUR LEAVE?
WE SHALL ESCORT YOU HOME.

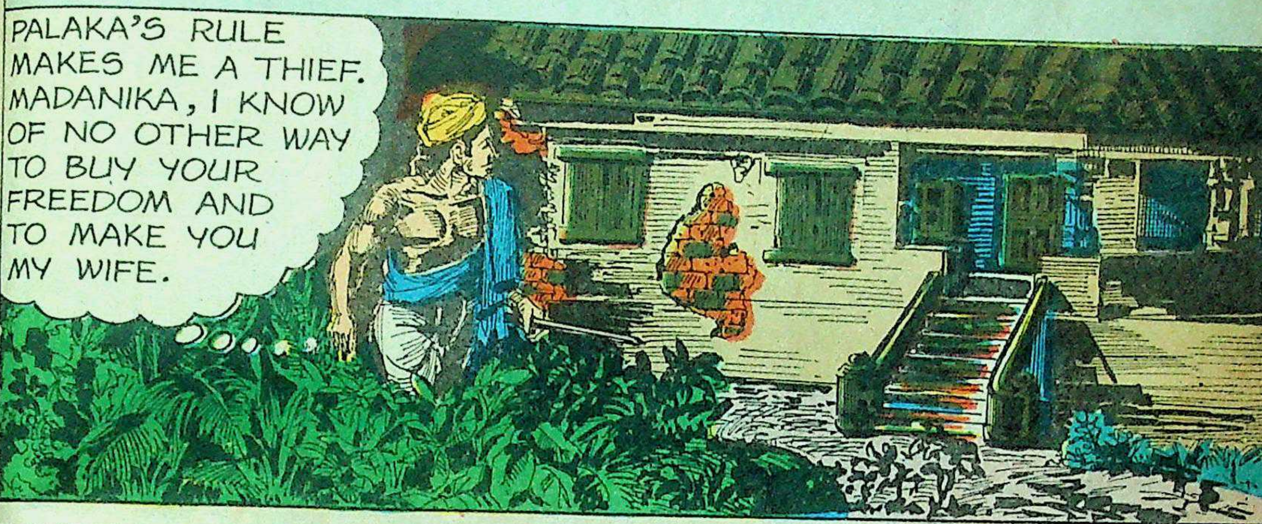

WHEN THEY REACHED THE GATE OF HER HOUSE –
AH! THERE GOES MADANIKA, MY FAITHFUL SLAVE. THANK YOU, SIRS.
FARE YOU WELL.

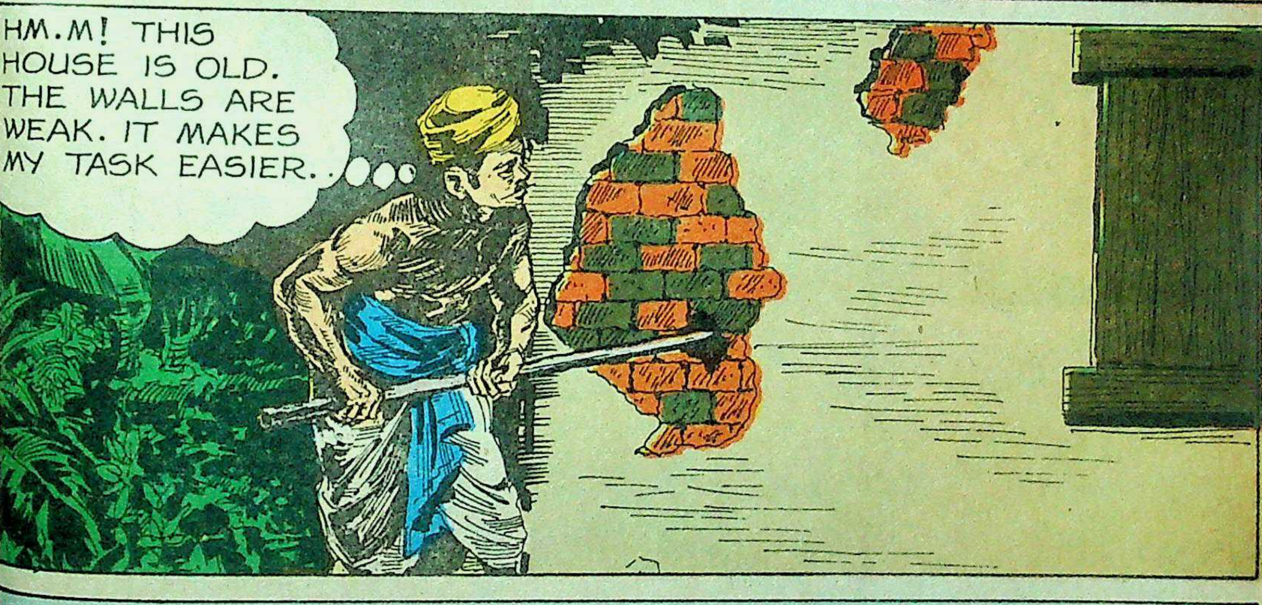

ONCE INSIDE, VASANTASENA CONFIDED IN MADANIKA.
NOW THAT YOUR JEWELS ARE IN HIS CARE YOU CAN MEET HIM OFTENER, MY LADY.
THAT HAS OCCURRED TO ME TOO.


HOW WELL I UNDERSTAND MY MISTRESS'S FEELINGS! MY LOVE FOR SHARVILAKA WOULD HAVE MADE ME DO THE SAME. HOW I LONG FOR THE DAY WHEN I MIGHT BECOME HIS WIFE.

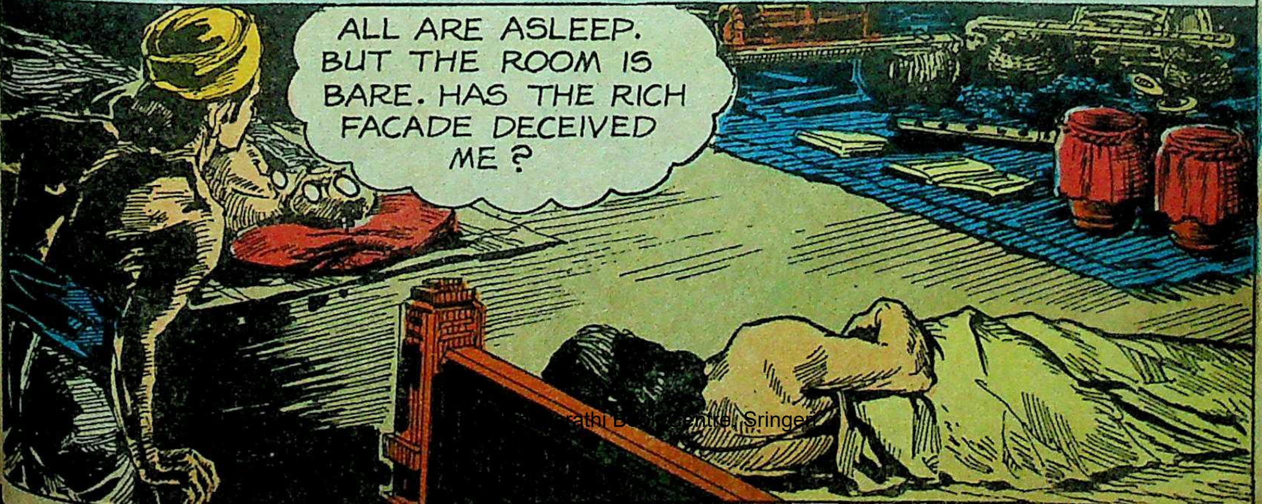

MEANWHILE, CHARUDATTA AND MAITREYA WERE RETIRING FOR THE NIGHT.
ARE THE JEWELS SAFE?
YES! RIGHT UNDER MY PILLOW. WE MAY SLEEP IN PEACE.

THAT NIGHT A FIGURE STOLE QUIETLY INTO CHARUDATTA'S GARDEN. IT WAS SHARVILAKA.


PALAKA'S RULE MAKES ME A THIEF. MADANIKA, I KNOW OF NO OTHER WAY TO BUY YOUR FREEDOM AND TO MAKE YOU MY WIFE.


HM.M! THIS HOUSE IS OLD. THE WALLS ARE WEAK. IT MAKES MY TASK EASIER.

SHARVILAKA ENTERED THE ROOM WHERE CHARUDATTA AND MAITREYA WERE SLEEPING.


ALL ARE ASLEEP. BUT THE ROOM IS BARE. HAS THE RICH FACADE DECEIVED ME?

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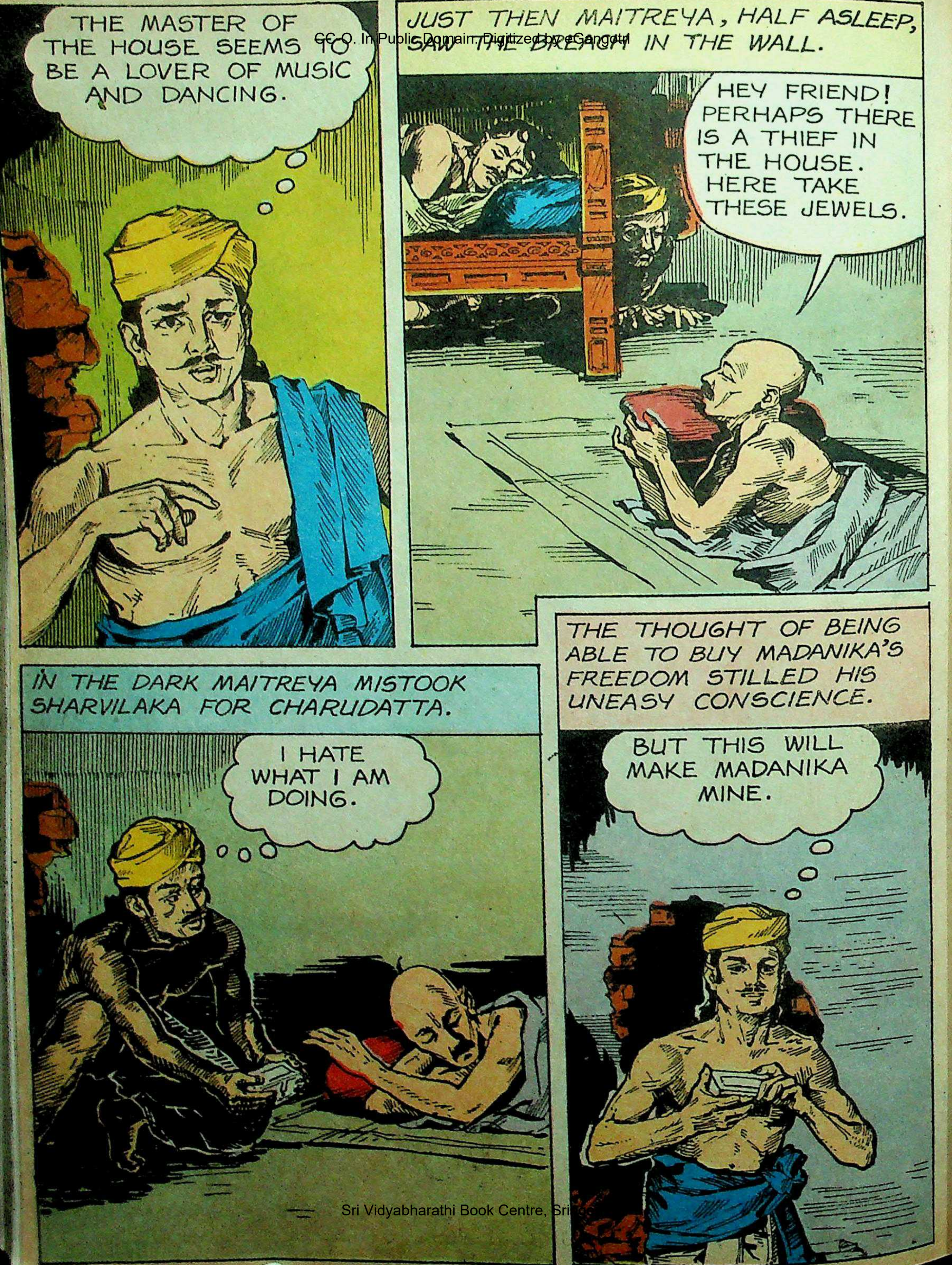
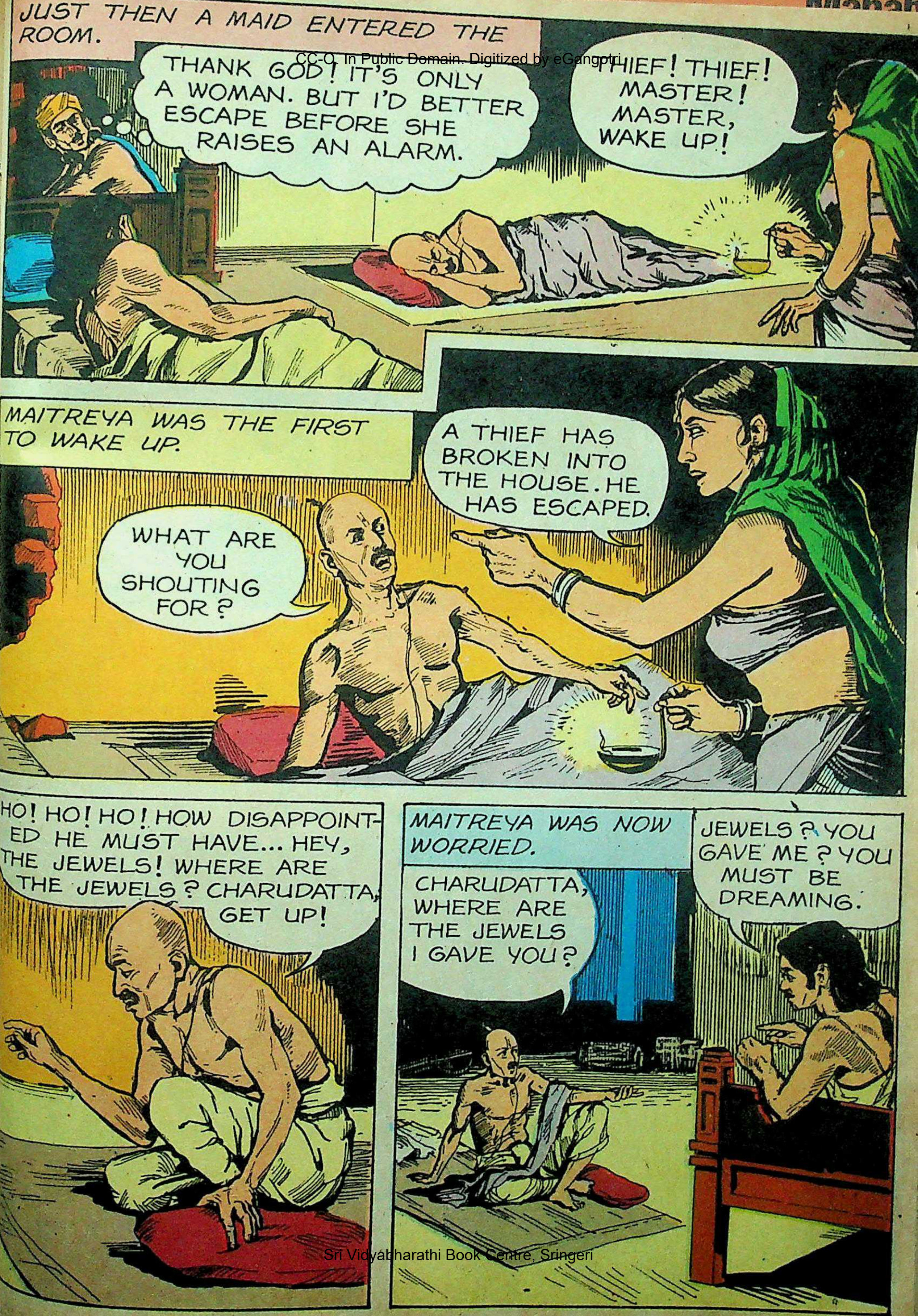
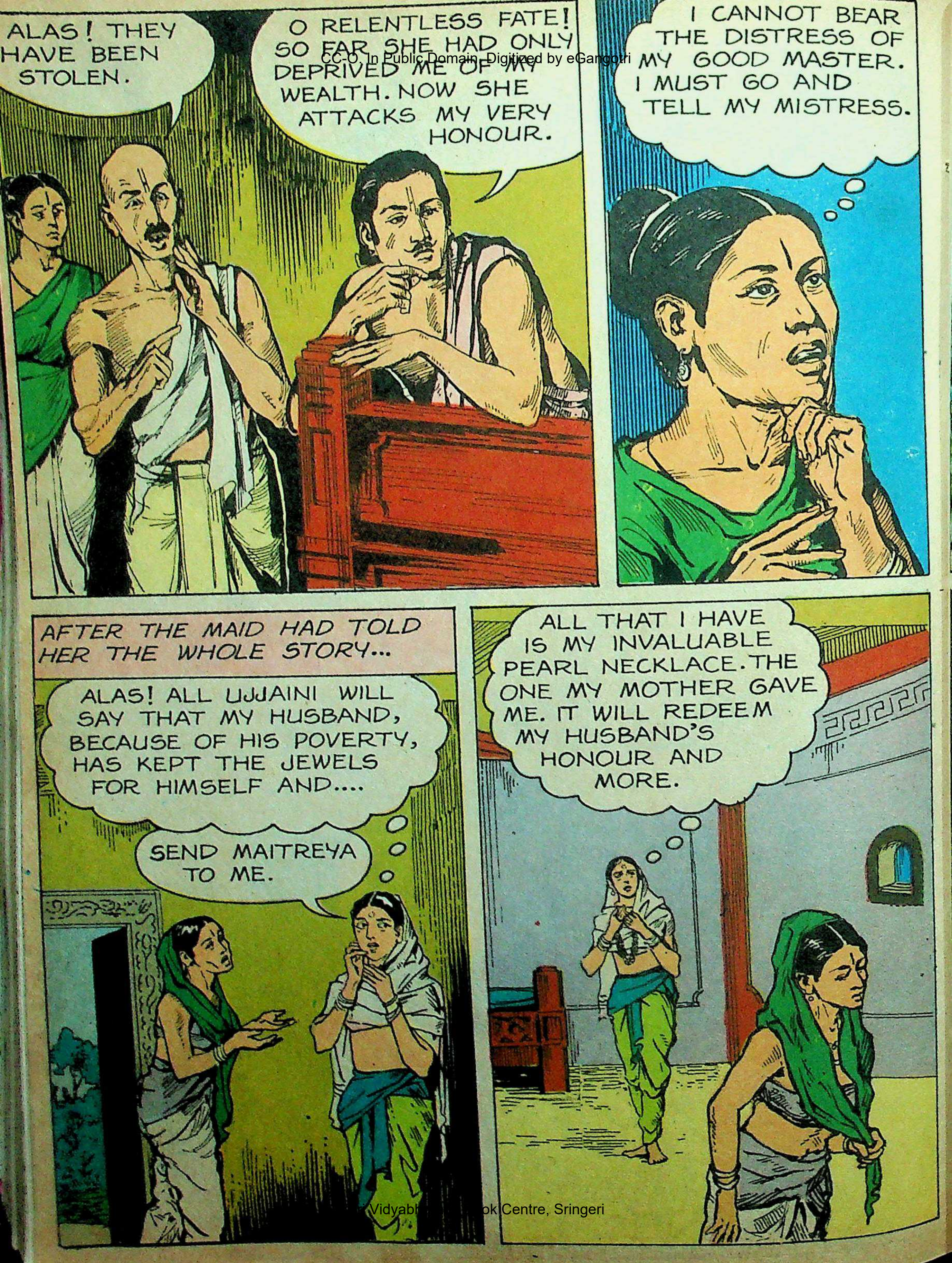


THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE SEEMS TO BE A LOVER OF MUSIC AND DANCING.
JUST THEN MAITREYA, HALF ASLEEP, SAW THE BREACH IN THE WALL.
HEY FRIEND! PERHAPS THERE IS A THIEF IN THE HOUSE. HERE TAKE THESE JEWELS.
IN THE DARK MAITREYA MISTOOK SHARVILAKA FOR CHARUDATTA.
I HATE WHAT I AM DOING.
THE THOUGHT OF BEING ABLE TO BUY MADANIKA'S FREEDOM STILLED HIS UNEASY CONSCIENCE.
BUT THIS WILL MAKE MADANIKA MINE.


JUST THEN A MAID ENTERED THE ROOM.
THANK GOD! IT'S ONLY A WOMAN. BUT I'D BETTER ESCAPE BEFORE SHE RAISES AN ALARM.
THIEF! THIEF! MASTER! MASTER, WAKE UP!
MAITREYA WAS THE FIRST TO WAKE UP.
A THIEF HAS BROKEN INTO THE HOUSE. HE HAS ESCAPED.
WHAT ARE YOU SHOUTING FOR?
HO! HO! HO! HOW DISAPPOINTED HE MUST HAVE... HEY, THE JEWELS! WHERE ARE THE JEWELS? CHARUDATTA, GET UP!
MAITREYA WAS NOW WORRIED.
CHARUDATTA, WHERE ARE THE JEWELS I GAVE YOU?
JEWELS? YOU GAVE ME? YOU MUST BE DREAMING.


ALAS! THEY HAVE BEEN STOLEN.
O RELENTLESS FATE! SO FAR SHE HAD ONLY DEPRIVED ME OF MY WEALTH. NOW SHE ATTACKS MY VERY HONOUR.
I CANNOT BEAR THE DISTRESS OF MY GOOD MASTER. I MUST GO AND TELL MY MISTRESS.
AFTER THE MAID HAD TOLD HER THE WHOLE STORY...
ALAS! ALL UJJAINI WILL SAY THAT MY HUSBAND, BECAUSE OF HIS POVERTY, HAS KEPT THE JEWELS FOR HIMSELF AND....
SEND MAITREYA TO ME.
ALL THAT I HAVE IS MY INVALUABLE PEARL NECKLACE. THE ONE MY MOTHER GAVE ME. IT WILL REDEEM MY HUSBAND'S HONOUR AND MORE.

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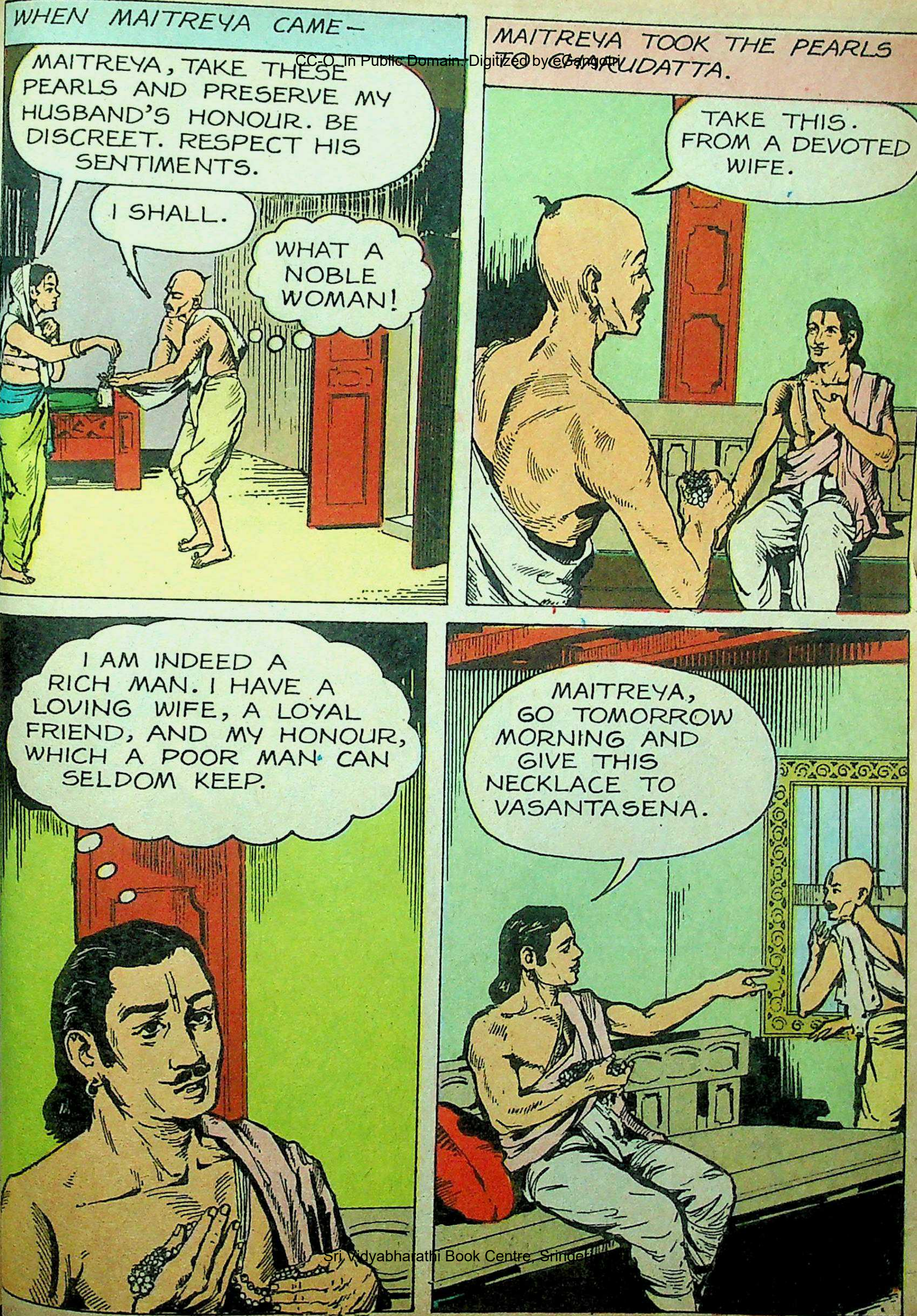
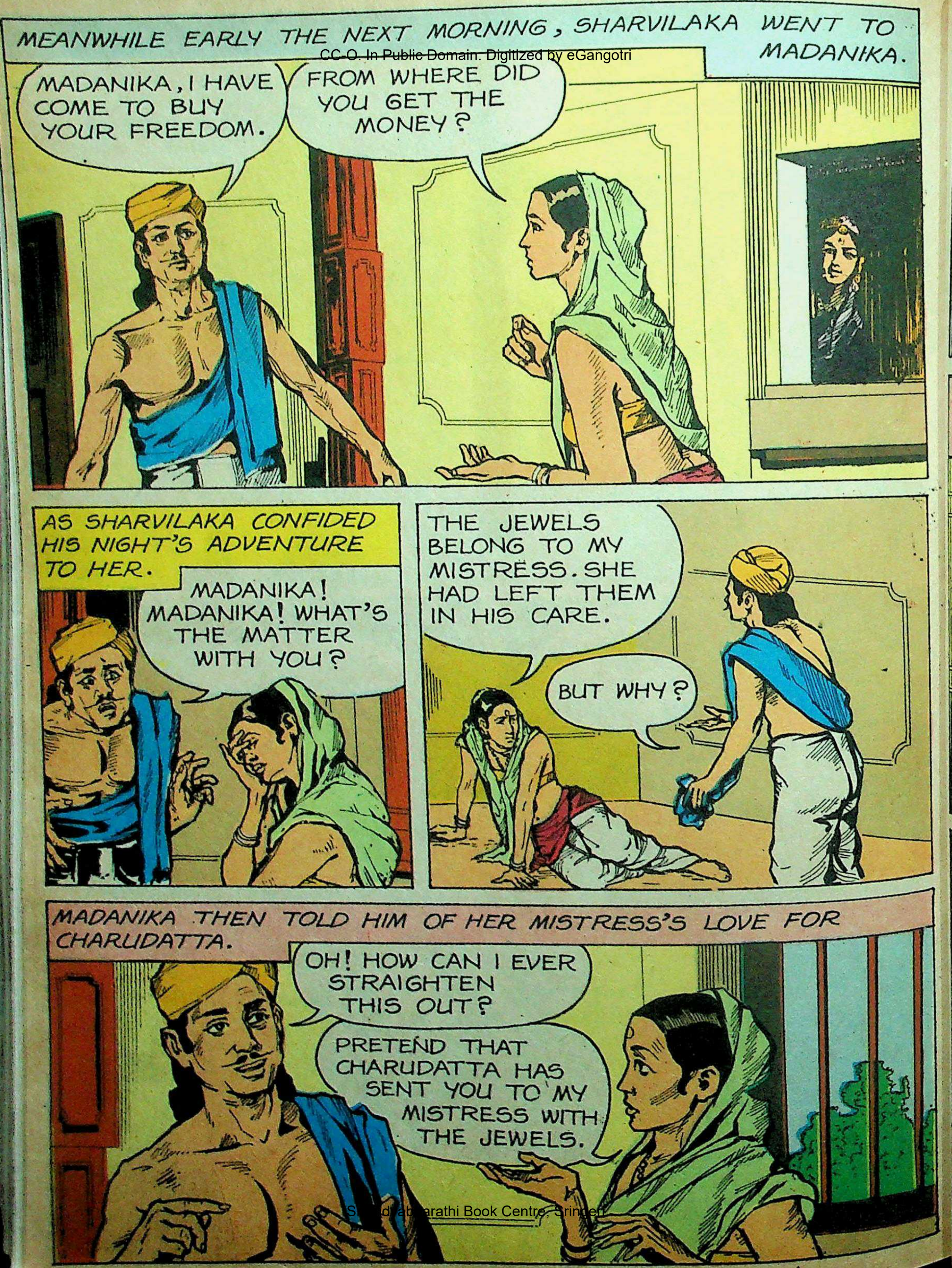

WHEN MAITREYA CAME—
MAITREYA, TAKE THESE PEARLS AND PRESERVE MY HUSBAND'S HONOUR. BE DISCREET. RESPECT HIS SENTIMENTS.
I SHALL.
WHAT A NOBLE WOMAN!
MAITREYA TOOK THE PEARLS TO CHARUDATTA.
TAKE THIS. FROM A DEVOTED WIFE.
I AM INDEED A RICH MAN. I HAVE A LOVING WIFE, A LOYAL FRIEND, AND MY HONOUR, WHICH A POOR MAN CAN SELDOM KEEP.
MAITREYA, GO TOMORROW MORNING AND GIVE THIS NECKLACE TO VASANTASENA.


MEANWHILE EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, SHARVILAKA WENT TO MADANIKA.
MADANIKA, I HAVE COME TO BUY YOUR FREEDOM.
FROM WHERE DID YOU GET THE MONEY?
AS SHARVILAKA CONFIDED HIS NIGHT'S ADVENTURE TO HER.
MADANIKA! MADANIKA! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
THE JEWELS BELONG TO MY MISTRESS. SHE HAD LEFT THEM IN HIS CARE.
BUT WHY?
MADANIKA THEN TOLD HIM OF HER MISTRESS'S LOVE FOR CHARUDATTA.
OH! HOW CAN I EVER STRAIGHTEN THIS OUT?
PRETEND THAT CHARUDATTA HAS SENT YOU TO MY MISTRESS WITH THE JEWELS.

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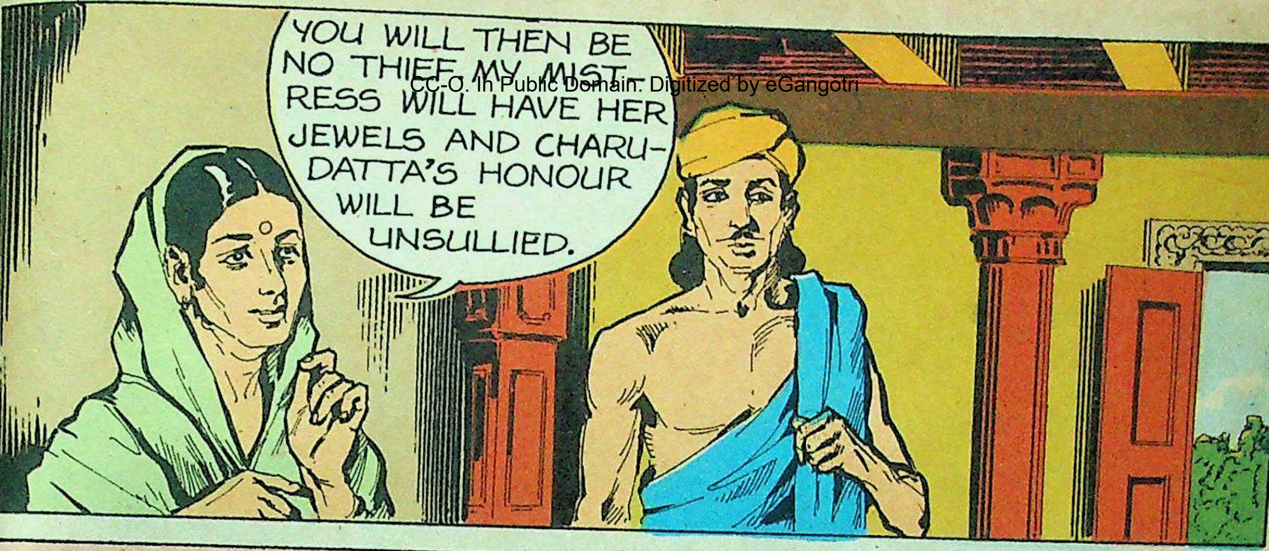
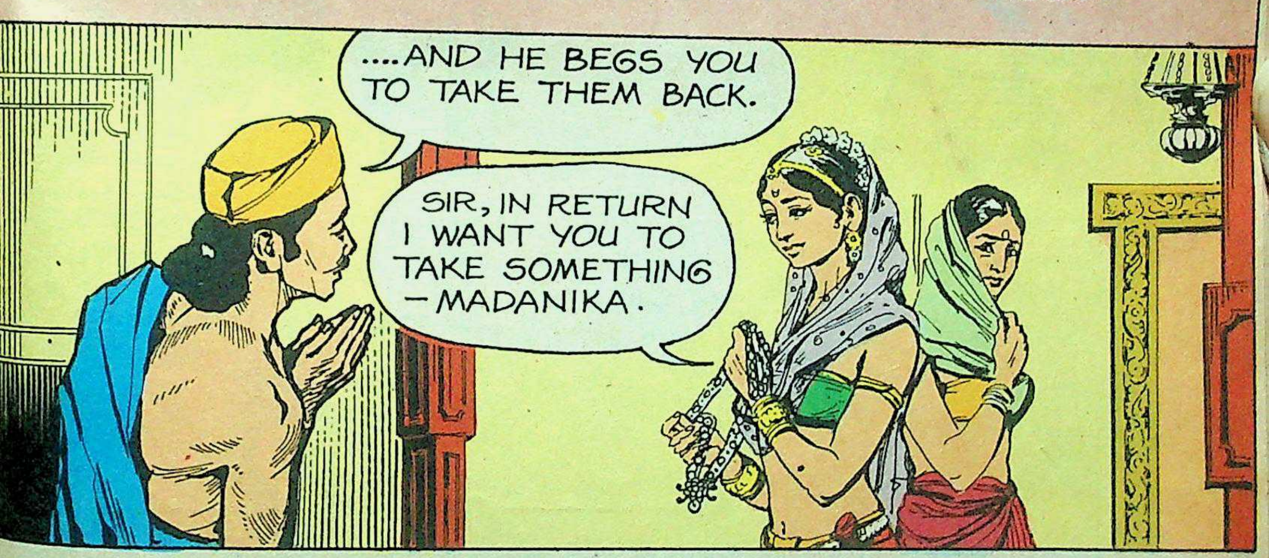
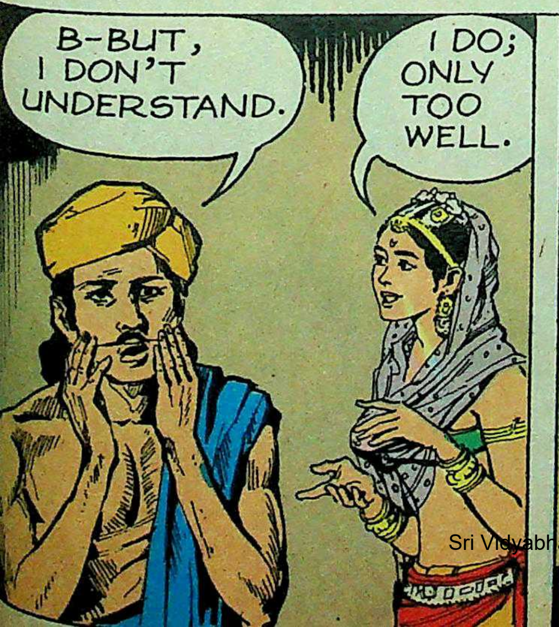
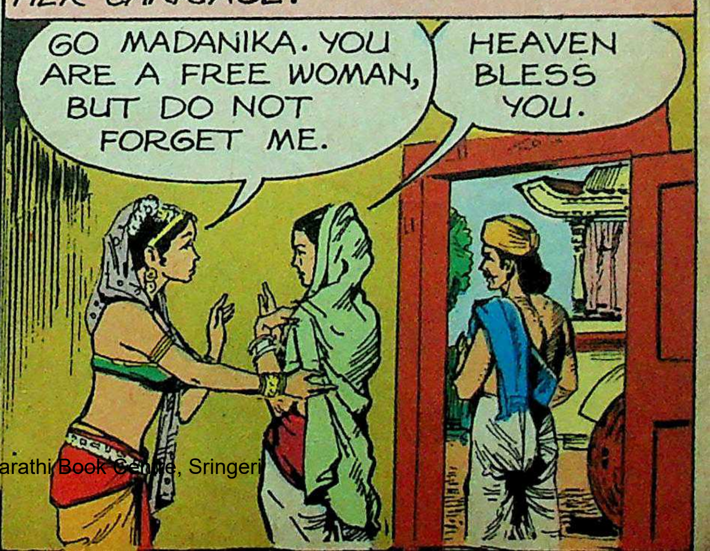

YOU WILL THEN BE NO THIEF. MY MISTRESS WILL HAVE HER JEWELS AND CHARUDATTA'S HONOUR WILL BE UNSULLIED.

SHARVILAKA, NOT KNOWING THAT VASANTASENA HAD OVERHEARD THE CONVERSATION, DID EXACTLY AS MADANIKA ADVISED.

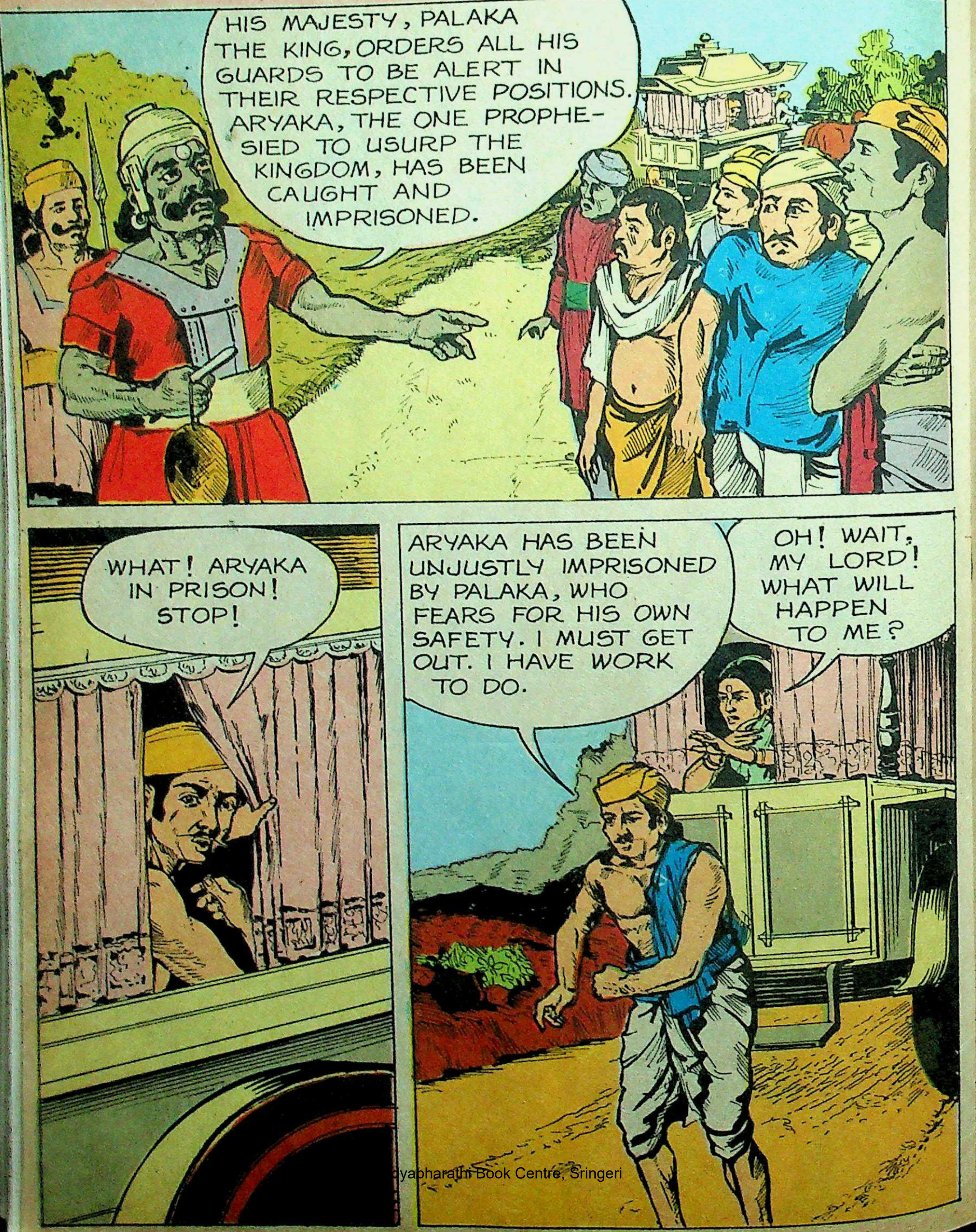

....AND HE BEGS YOU TO TAKE THEM BACK.
SIR, IN RETURN I WANT YOU TO TAKE SOMETHING – MADANIKA.

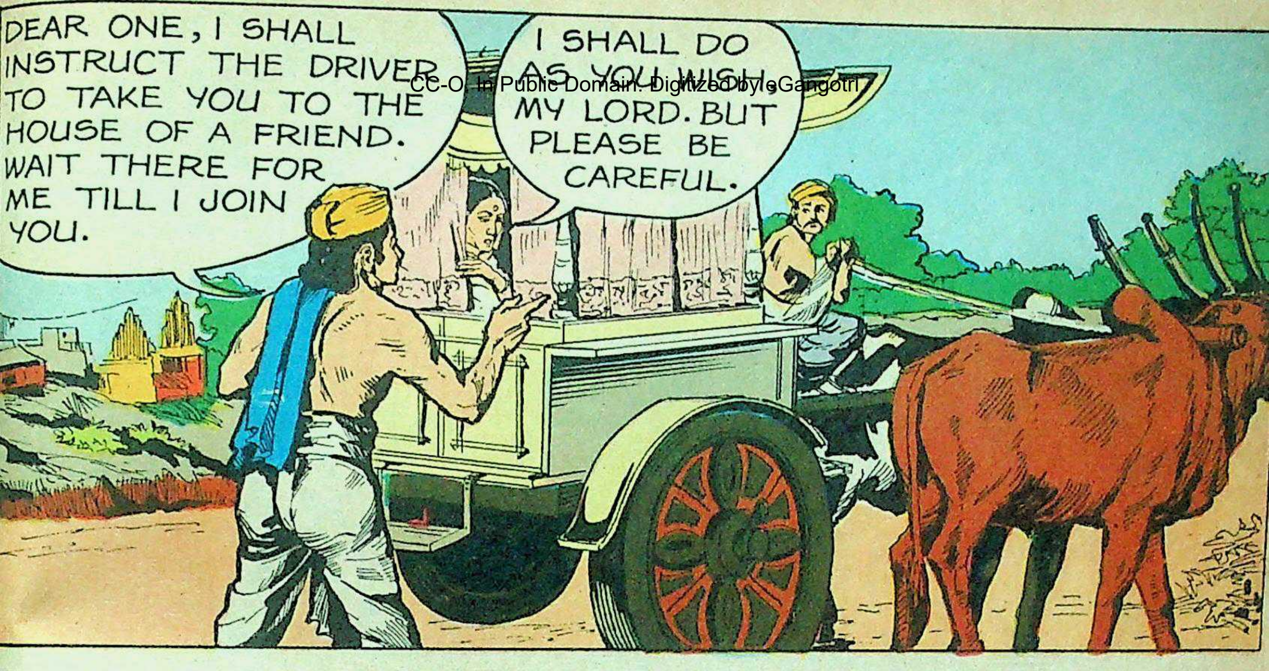

B-BUT, I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
I DO; ONLY TOO WELL.

VASANTASENA THEN SENT FOR HER CARRIAGE.

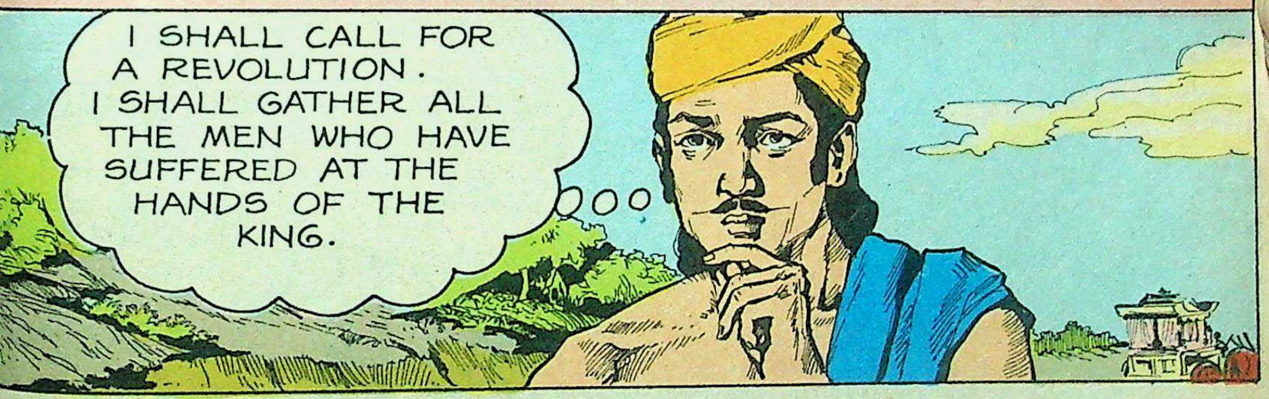

GO MADANIKA. YOU ARE A FREE WOMAN, BUT DO NOT FORGET ME.
HEAVEN BLESS YOU.

AS SHARVILAKA AND MADANIKA RODE ALONG, THE KING'S HERALD WAS OUT ON THE STREETS MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT.

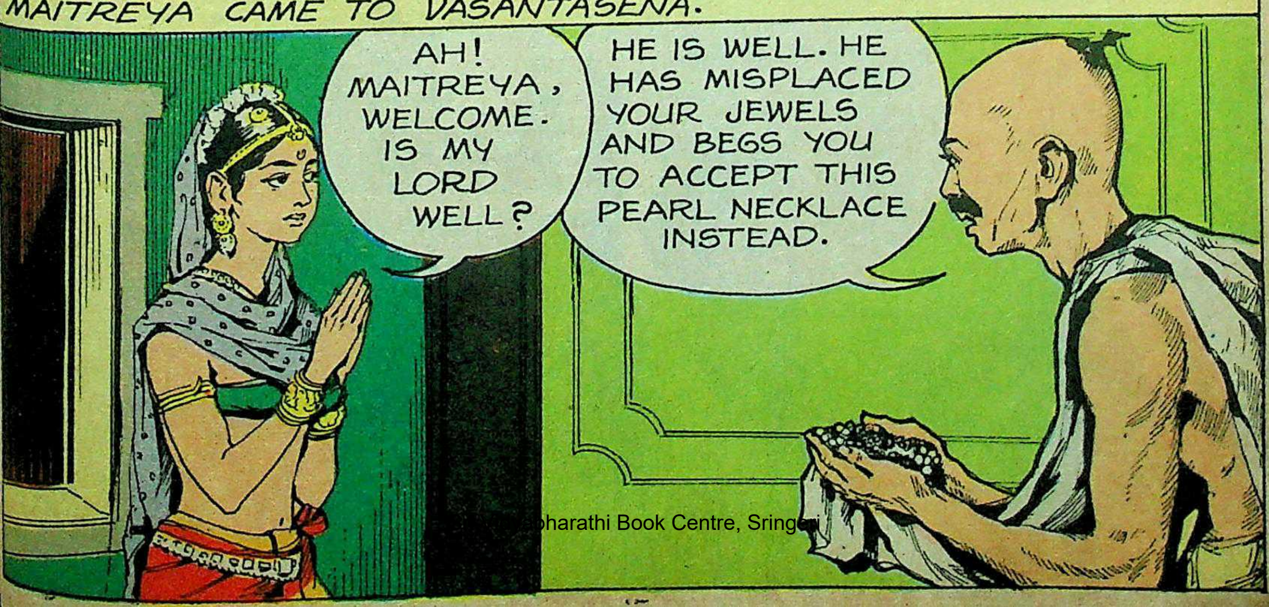

HIS MAJESTY, PALAKA THE KING, ORDERS ALL HIS GUARDS TO BE ALERT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE POSITIONS. ARYAKA, THE ONE PROPHESIED TO USURP THE KINGDOM, HAS BEEN CAUGHT AND IMPRISONED.
WHAT! ARYAKA IN PRISON! STOP!
ARYAKA HAS BEEN UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED BY PALAKA, WHO FEARS FOR HIS OWN SAFETY. I MUST GET OUT. I HAVE WORK TO DO.
OH! WAIT, MY LORD! WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME?

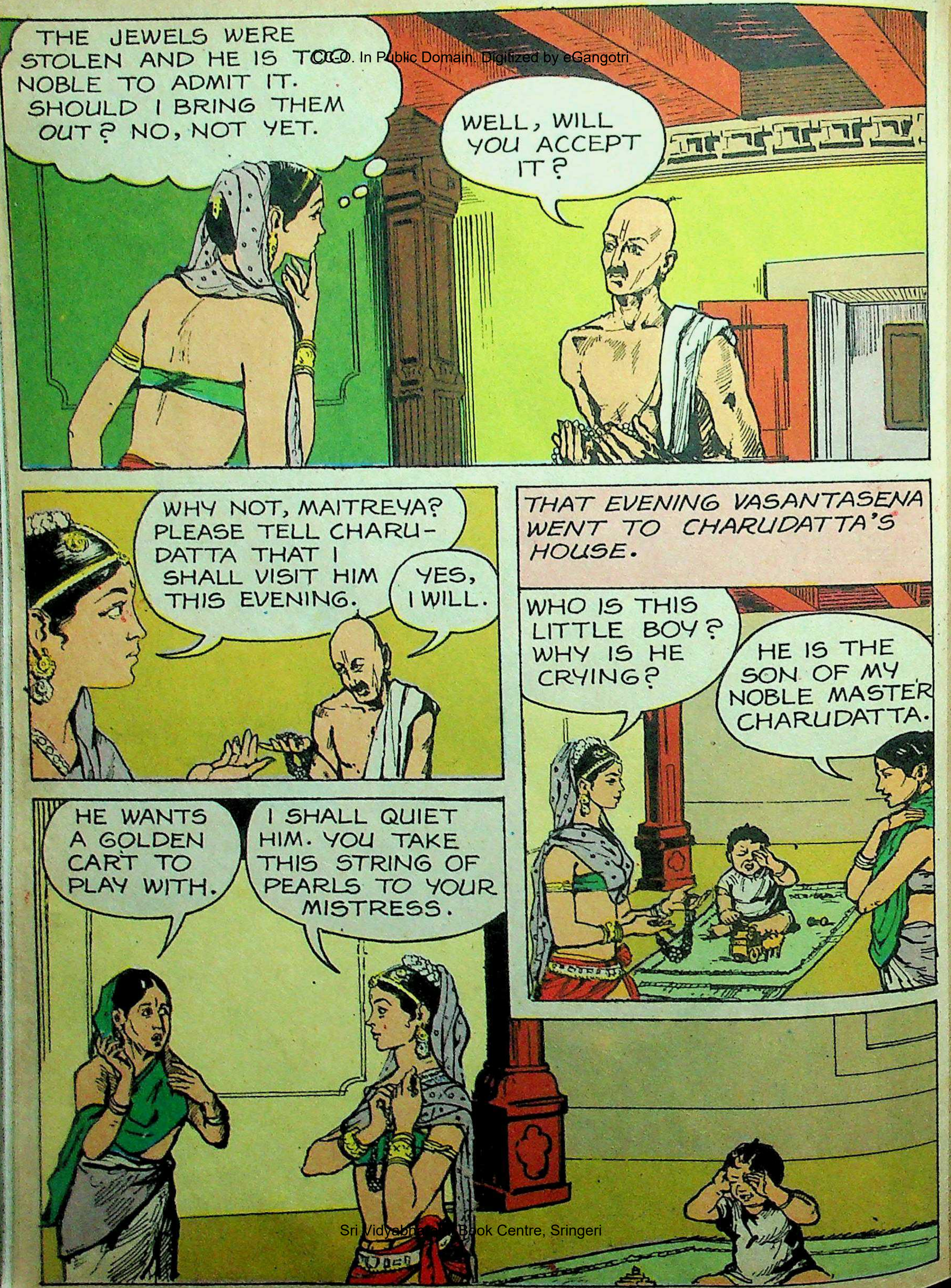

DEAR ONE, I SHALL INSTRUCT THE DRIVER TO TAKE YOU TO THE HOUSE OF A FRIEND. WAIT THERE FOR ME TILL I JOIN YOU.
I SHALL DO AS YOU WISH MY LORD. BUT PLEASE BE CAREFUL.

WHEN THE CARRIAGE DROVE AWAY WITH MADANIKA –


I SHALL CALL FOR A REVOLUTION. I SHALL GATHER ALL THE MEN WHO HAVE SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE KING.

HARDLY HAD SHARVILAKA AND MADANIKA LEFT, WHEN MAITREYA CAME TO VASANTASENA.


AH! MAITREYA, WELCOME. IS MY LORD WELL?
HE IS WELL. HE HAS MISPLACED YOUR JEWELS AND BEGS YOU TO ACCEPT THIS PEARL NECKLACE INSTEAD.


THE JEWELS WERE STOLEN AND HE IS TOO NOBLE TO ADMIT IT. SHOULD I BRING THEM OUT? NO, NOT YET.
WELL, WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?
WHY NOT, MAITREYA? PLEASE TELL CHARUDATTA THAT I SHALL VISIT HIM THIS EVENING.
YES, I WILL.
THAT EVENING VASANTASENA WENT TO CHARUDATTA'S HOUSE.
WHO IS THIS LITTLE BOY? WHY IS HE CRYING?
HE IS THE SON OF MY NOBLE MASTER CHARUDATTA.
HE WANTS A GOLDEN CART TO PLAY WITH.
I SHALL QUIET HIM. YOU TAKE THIS STRING OF PEARLS TO YOUR MISTRESS.

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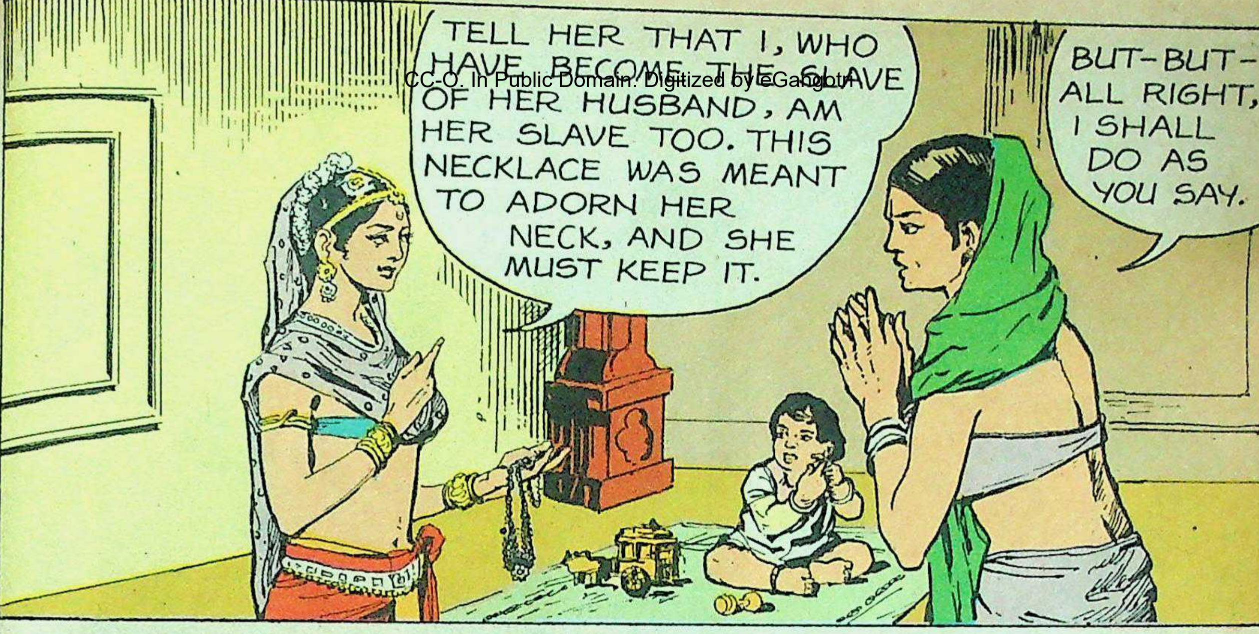
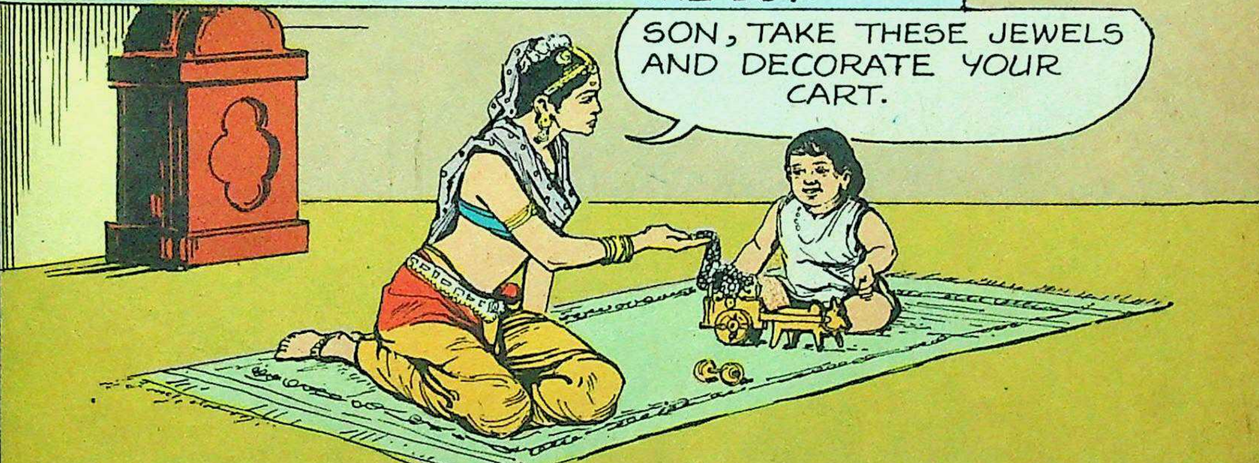
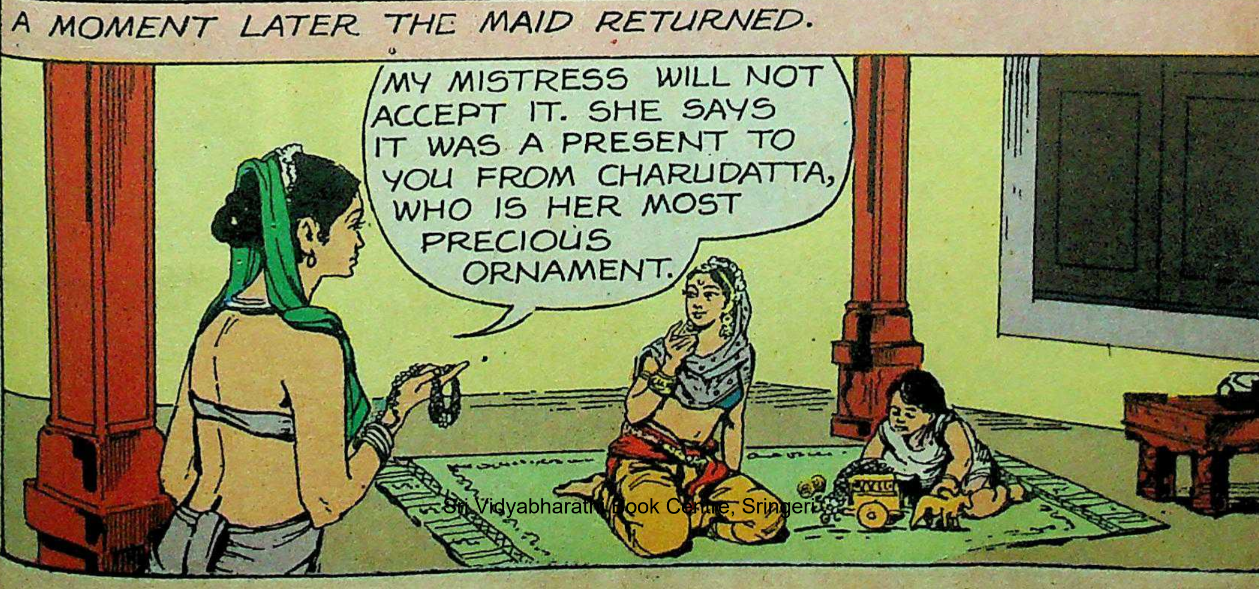

TELL HER THAT I, WHO HAVE BECOME THE SLAVE OF HER HUSBAND, AM HER SLAVE TOO. THIS NECKLACE WAS MEANT TO ADORN HER NECK, AND SHE MUST KEEP IT.
BUT-BUT- ALL RIGHT, I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.

VASANTASENA THEN REMOVED SOME OF HER OWN JEWELS AND TURNED TO THE BOY.


SON, TAKE THESE JEWELS AND DECORATE YOUR CART.

A MOMENT LATER THE MAID RETURNED.


MY MISTRESS WILL NOT ACCEPT IT. SHE SAYS IT WAS A PRESENT TO YOU FROM CHARUDATTA, WHO IS HER MOST PRECIOUS ORNAMENT.

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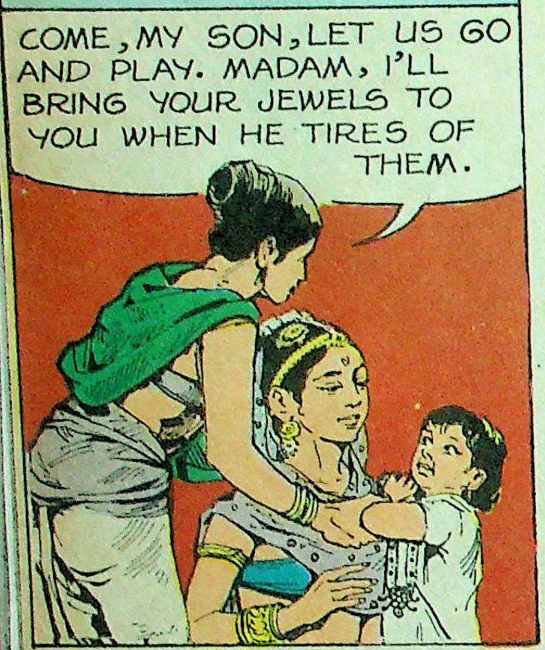
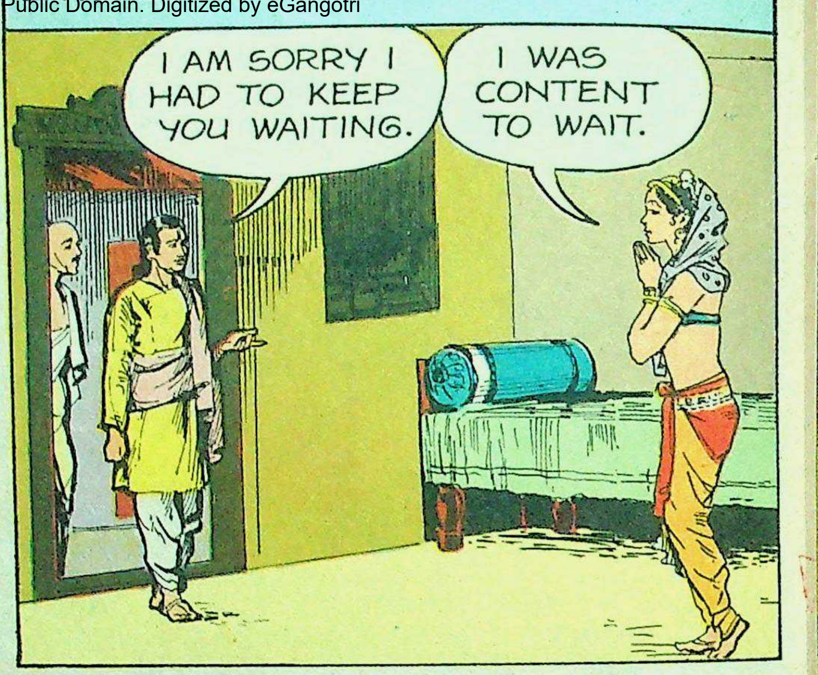
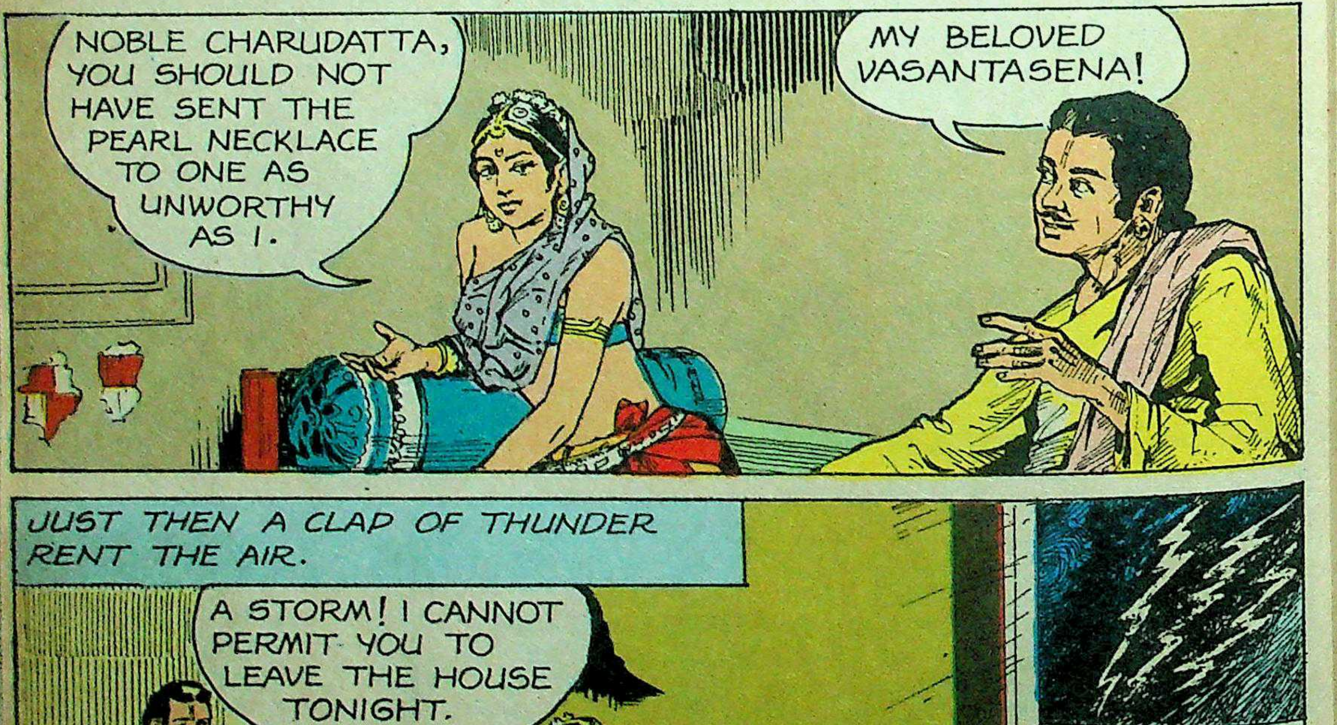
SHE THEN TURNED TO THE CHILD.

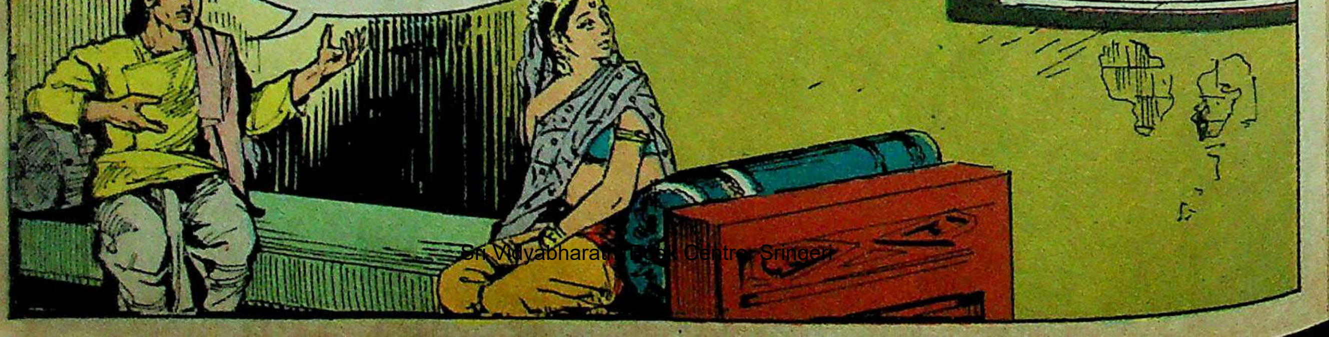

COME, MY SON, LET US GO AND PLAY. MADAM, I'LL BRING YOUR JEWELS TO YOU WHEN HE TIRES OF THEM.

A FEW MINUTES LATER CHARUDATTA ENTERED THE ROOM.


I AM SORRY I HAD TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
I WAS CONTENT TO WAIT.


NOBLE CHARUDATTA, YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE SENT THE PEARL NECKLACE TO ONE AS UNWORTHY AS I.
MY BELOVED VASANTASENA!

JUST THEN A CLAP OF THUNDER RENT THE AIR.


A STORM! I CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO LEAVE THE HOUSE TONIGHT.

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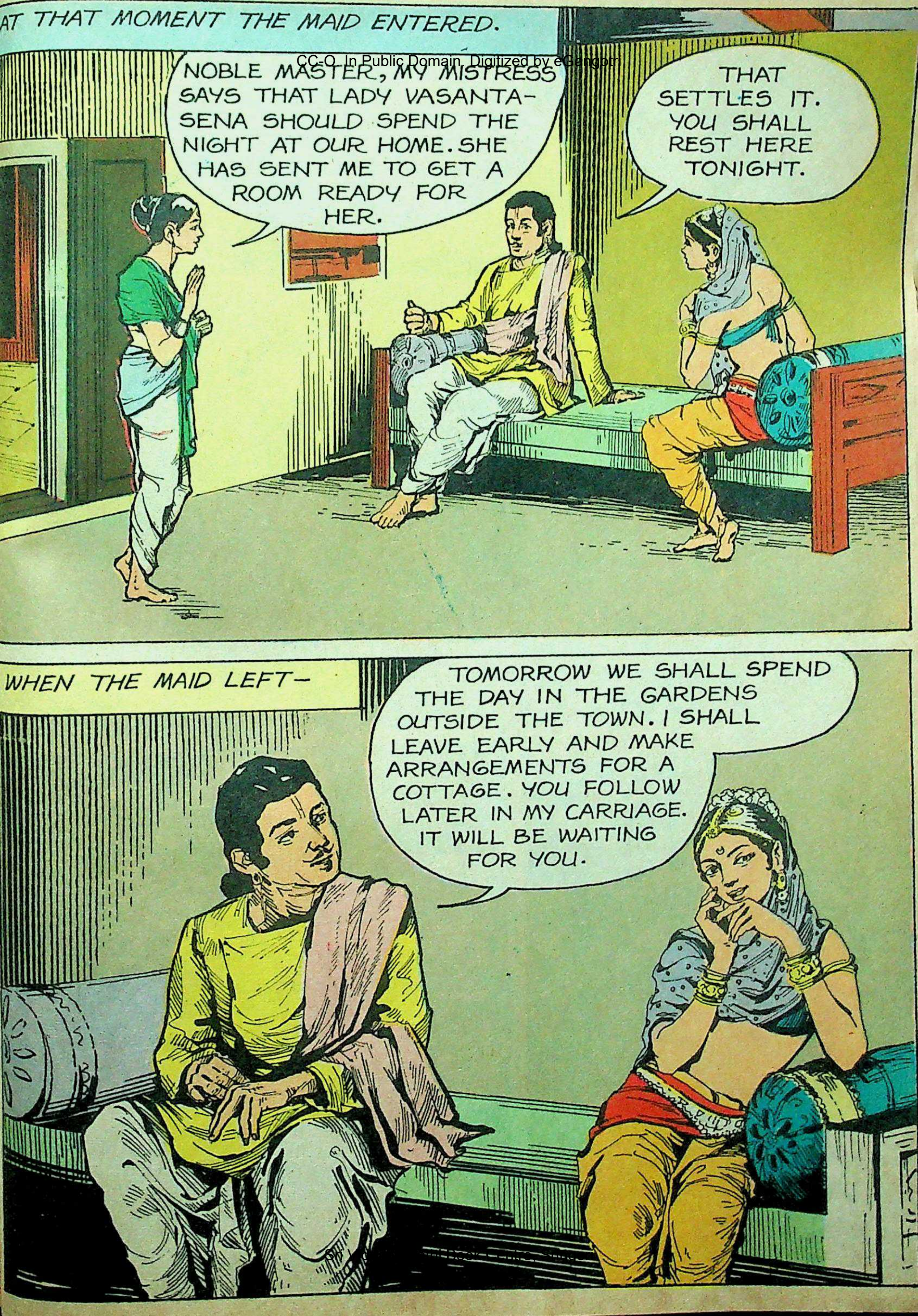
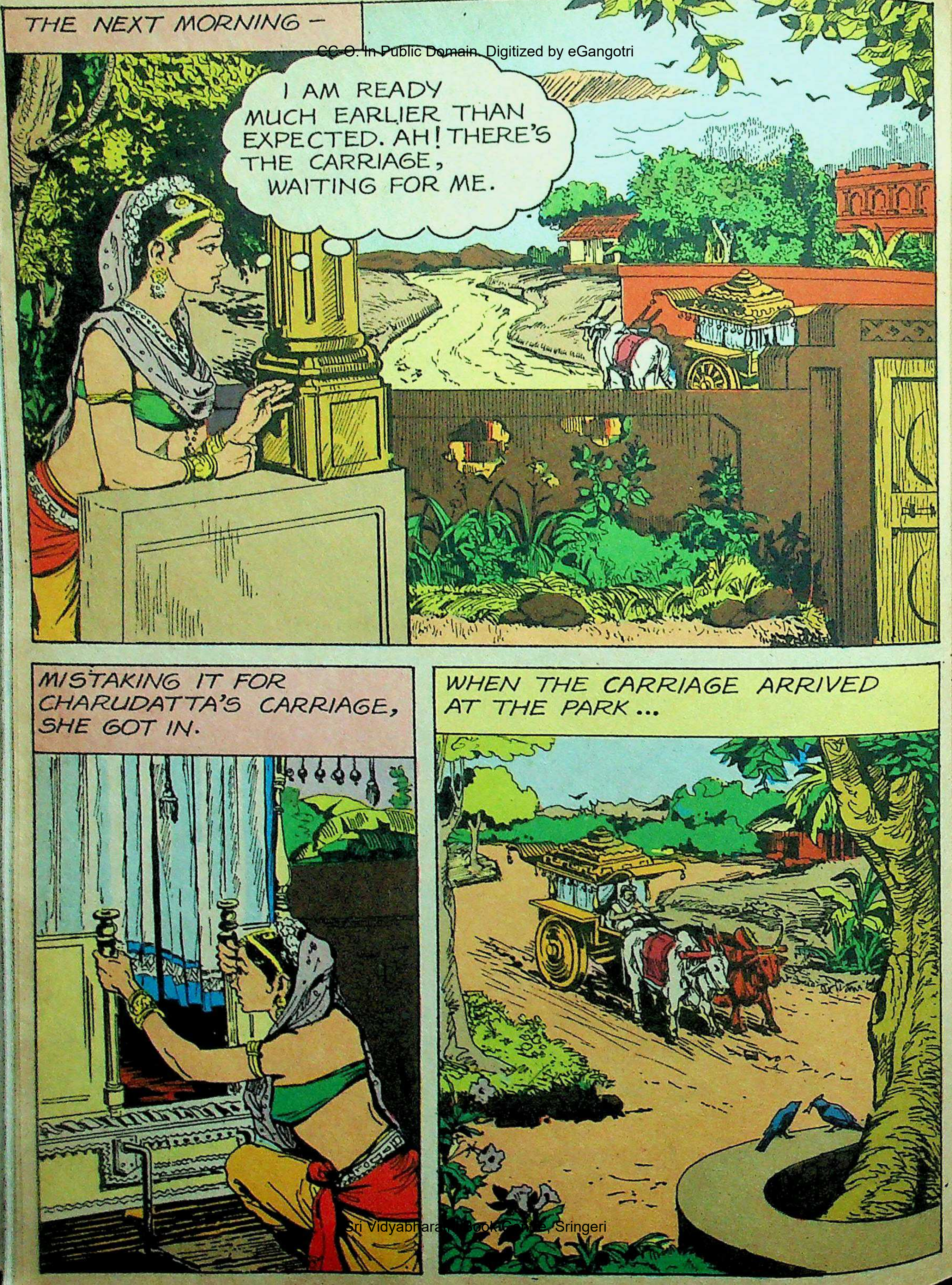

AT THAT MOMENT THE MAID ENTERED.
NOBLE MASTER, MY MISTRESS SAYS THAT LADY VASANTASENA SHOULD SPEND THE NIGHT AT OUR HOME. SHE HAS SENT ME TO GET A ROOM READY FOR HER.
THAT SETTLES IT. YOU SHALL REST HERE TONIGHT.
WHEN THE MAID LEFT—
TOMORROW WE SHALL SPEND THE DAY IN THE GARDENS OUTSIDE THE TOWN. I SHALL LEAVE EARLY AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A COTTAGE. YOU FOLLOW LATER IN MY CARRIAGE. IT WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU.


THE NEXT MORNING –
I AM READY MUCH EARLIER THAN EXPECTED. AH! THERE'S THE CARRIAGE, WAITING FOR ME.
MISTAKING IT FOR CHARUDATTA'S CARRIAGE, SHE GOT IN.
WHEN THE CARRIAGE ARRIVED AT THE PARK...

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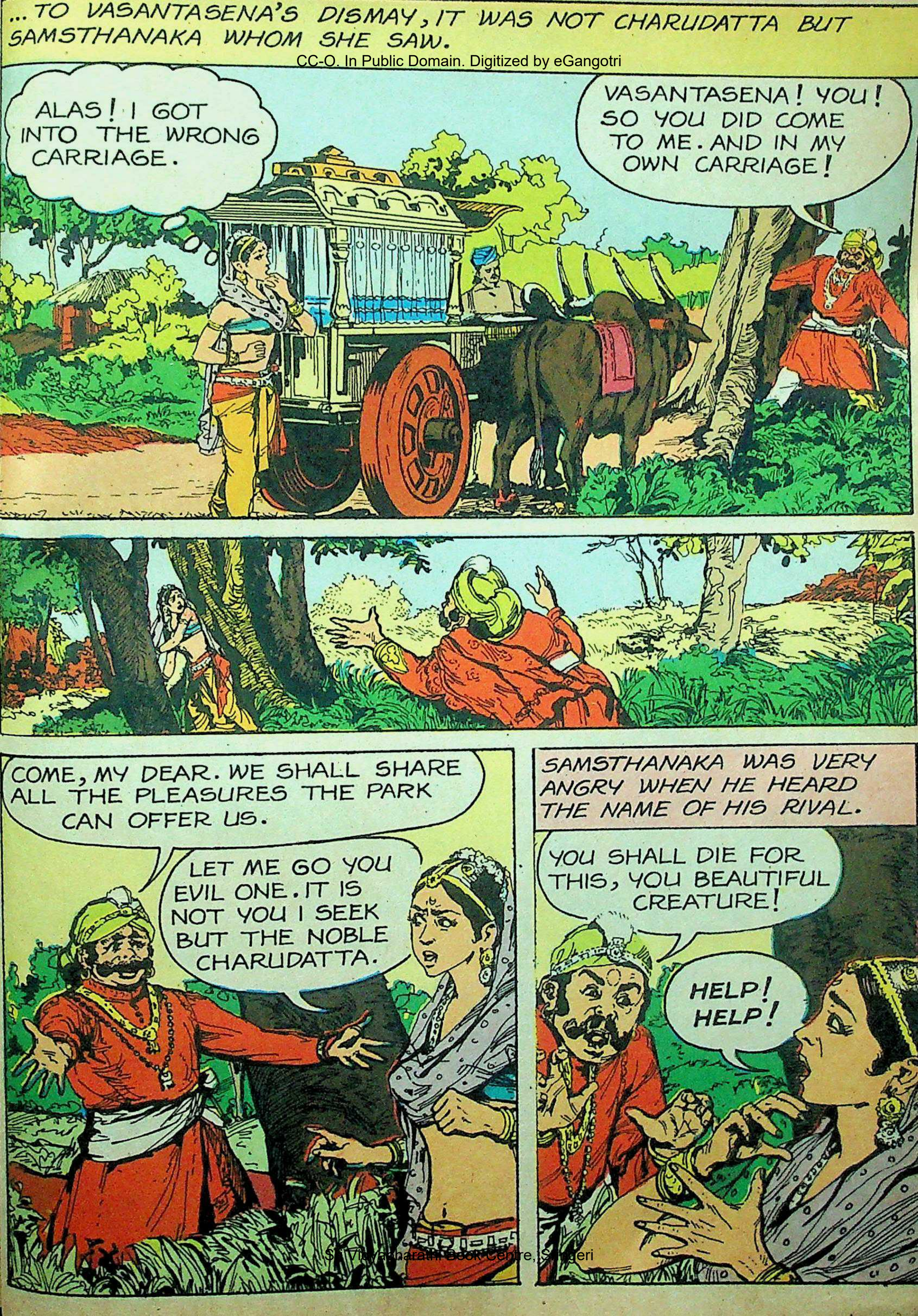
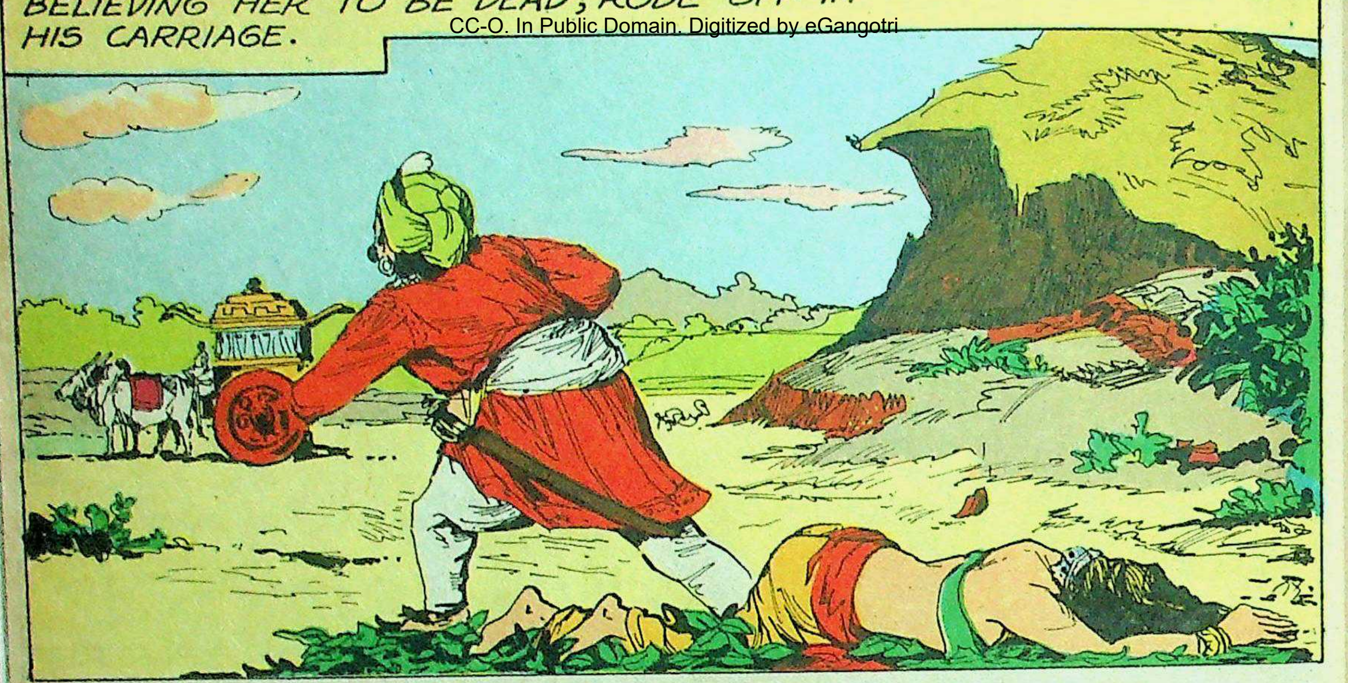
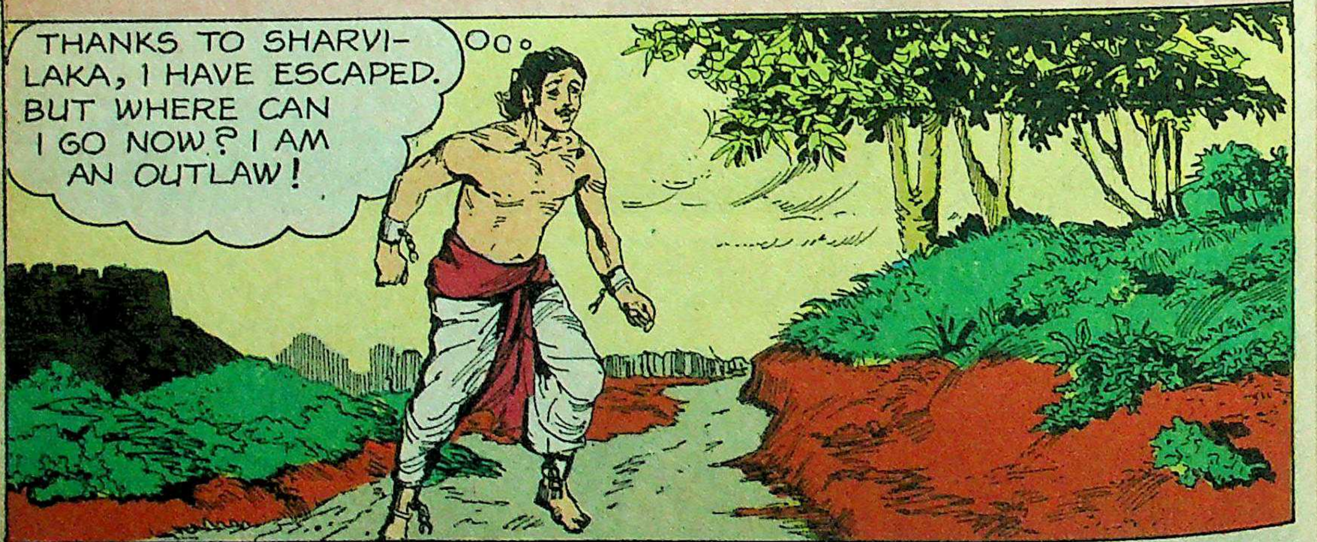

...TO VASANTASENA'S DISMAY, IT WAS NOT CHARUDATTA BUT SAMSTHANAKA WHOM SHE SAW.
ALAS! I GOT INTO THE WRONG CARRIAGE.
VASANTASENA! YOU! SO YOU DID COME TO ME. AND IN MY OWN CARRIAGE!
COME, MY DEAR. WE SHALL SHARE ALL THE PLEASURES THE PARK CAN OFFER US.
LET ME GO YOU EVIL ONE. IT IS NOT YOU I SEEK BUT THE NOBLE CHARUDATTA.
SAMSTHANAKA WAS VERY ANGRY WHEN HE HEARD THE NAME OF HIS RIVAL.
YOU SHALL DIE FOR THIS, YOU BEAUTIFUL CREATURE!
HELP! HELP!

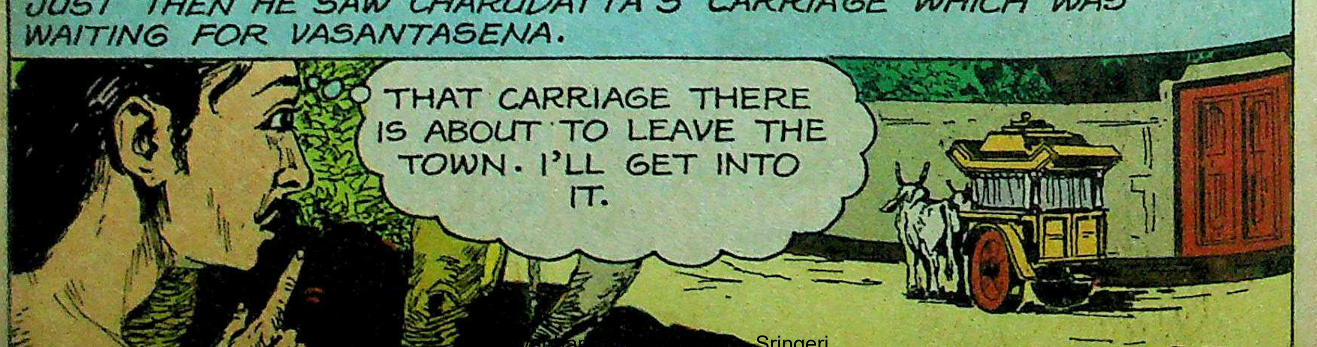
SAMSTHANAKA TRIED TO STRANGLE VASANTASENA AND, BELIEVING HER TO BE DEAD, RODE OFF IN HIS CARRIAGE.



MEANWHILE ARYAKA HAD ESCAPED FROM PRISON.


THANKS TO SHARVILAKA, I HAVE ESCAPED. BUT WHERE CAN I GO NOW? I AM AN OUTLAW!

JUST THEN HE SAW CHARUDATTA'S CARRIAGE WHICH WAS WAITING FOR VASANTASENA.


THAT CARRIAGE THERE IS ABOUT TO LEAVE THE TOWN. I'LL GET INTO IT.

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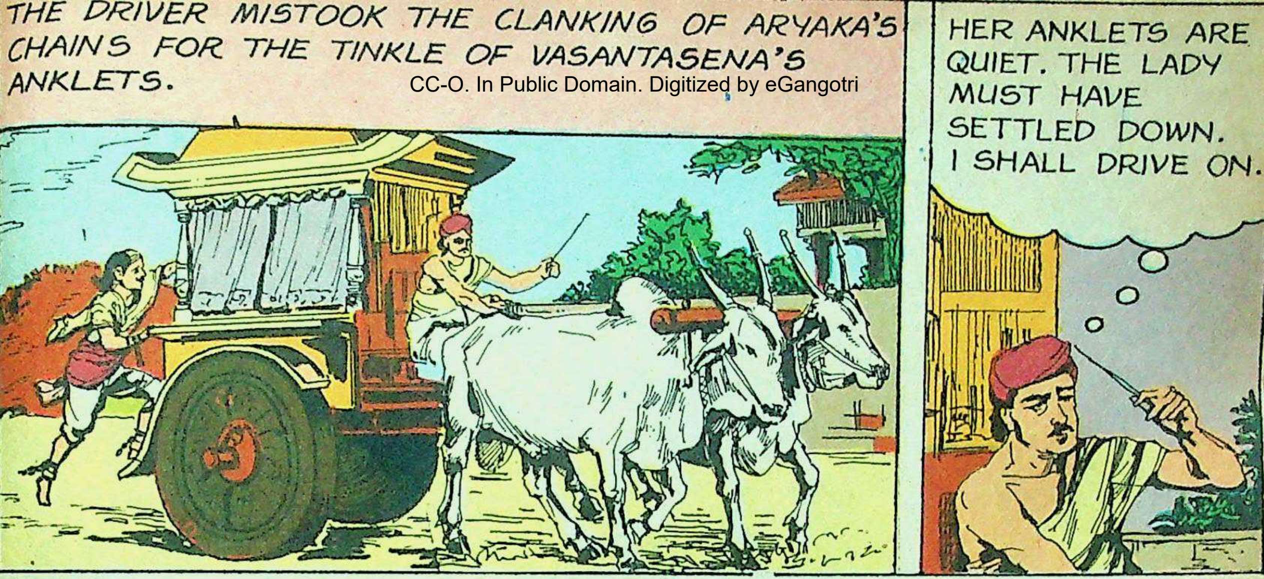
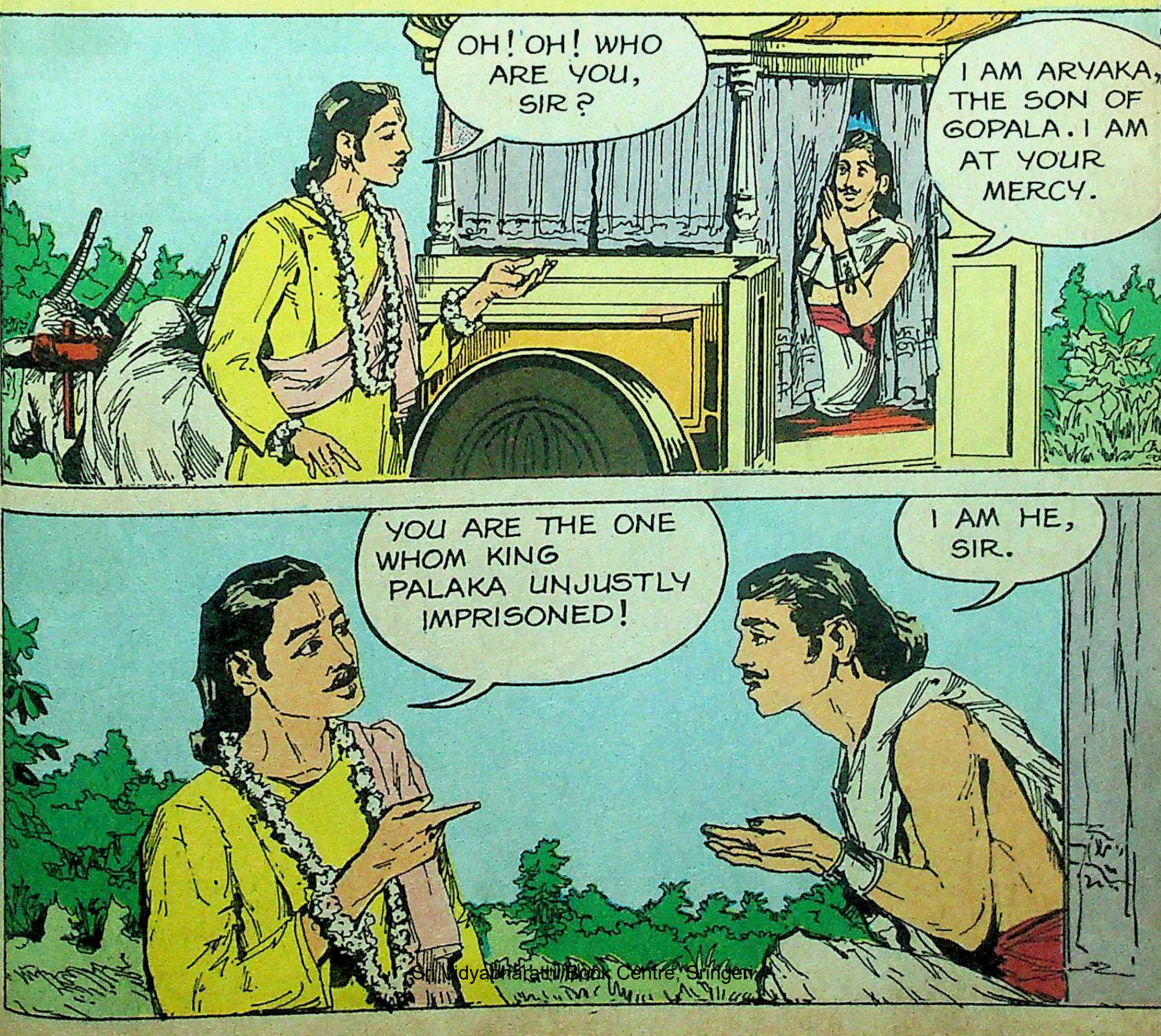
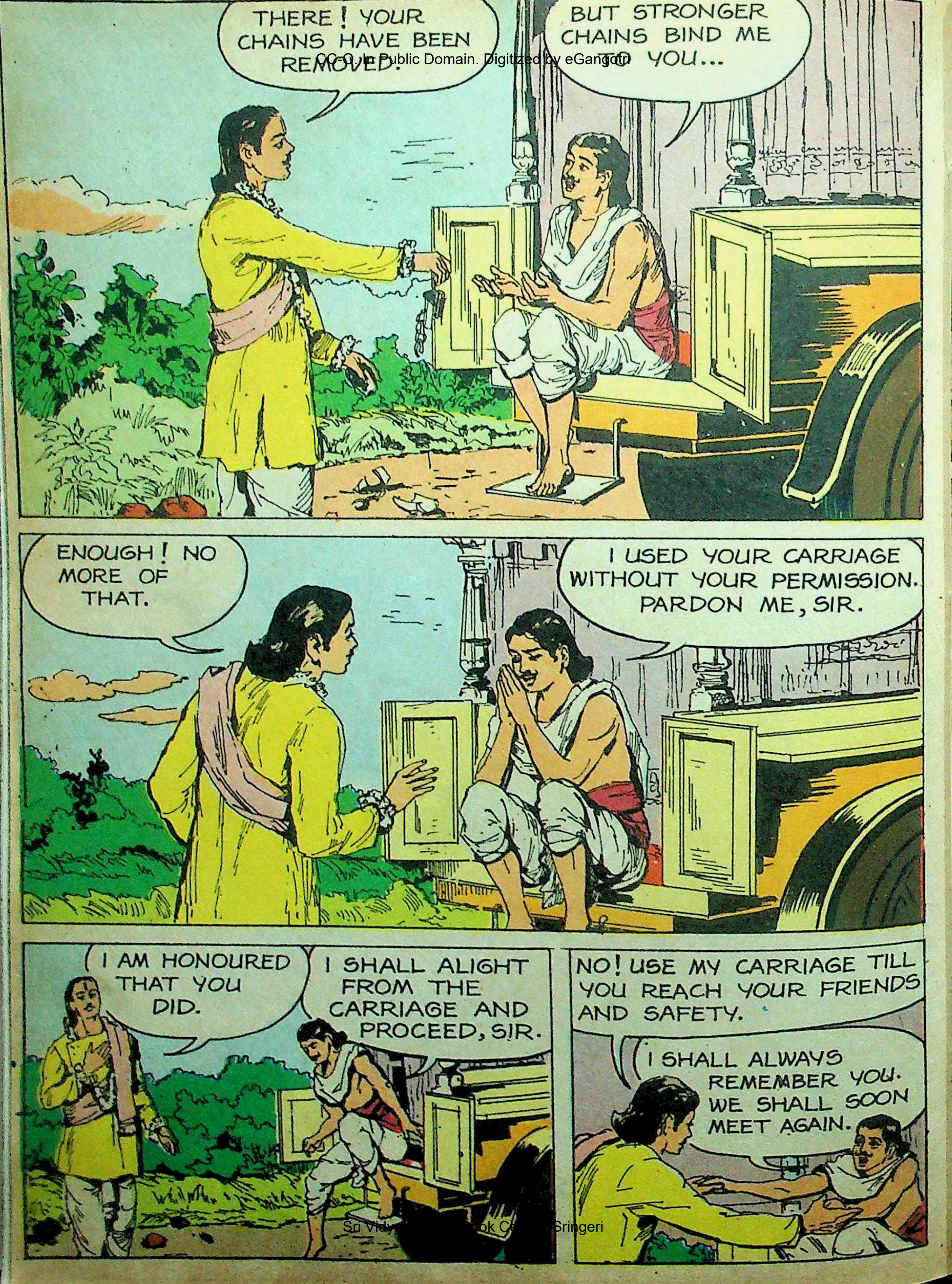
THE DRIVER MISTOOK THE CLANKING OF ARYAKA'S CHAINS FOR THE TINKLE OF VASANTASENA'S ANKLETS.


HER ANKLETS ARE QUIET. THE LADY MUST HAVE SETTLED DOWN. I SHALL DRIVE ON.

WHEN THE CARRIAGE ARRIVED AT THE PARK, THE EAGER CHARUDATTA STEPPED FORWARD TO HELP HIS LADY-LOVE OUT.


OH! OH! WHO ARE YOU, SIR?
I AM ARYAKA, THE SON OF GOPALA. I AM AT YOUR MERCY.
YOU ARE THE ONE WHOM KING PALAKA UNJUSTLY IMPRISONED!
I AM HE, SIR.


THERE! YOUR CHAINS HAVE BEEN REMOVED!
BUT STRONGER CHAINS BIND ME TO YOU...
ENOUGH! NO MORE OF THAT.
I USED YOUR CARRIAGE WITHOUT YOUR PERMISSION. PARDON ME, SIR.
I AM HONOURED THAT YOU DID.
I SHALL ALIGHT FROM THE CARRIAGE AND PROCEED, SIR.
NO! USE MY CARRIAGE TILL YOU REACH YOUR FRIENDS AND SAFETY.
I SHALL ALWAYS REMEMBER YOU. WE SHALL SOON MEET AGAIN.

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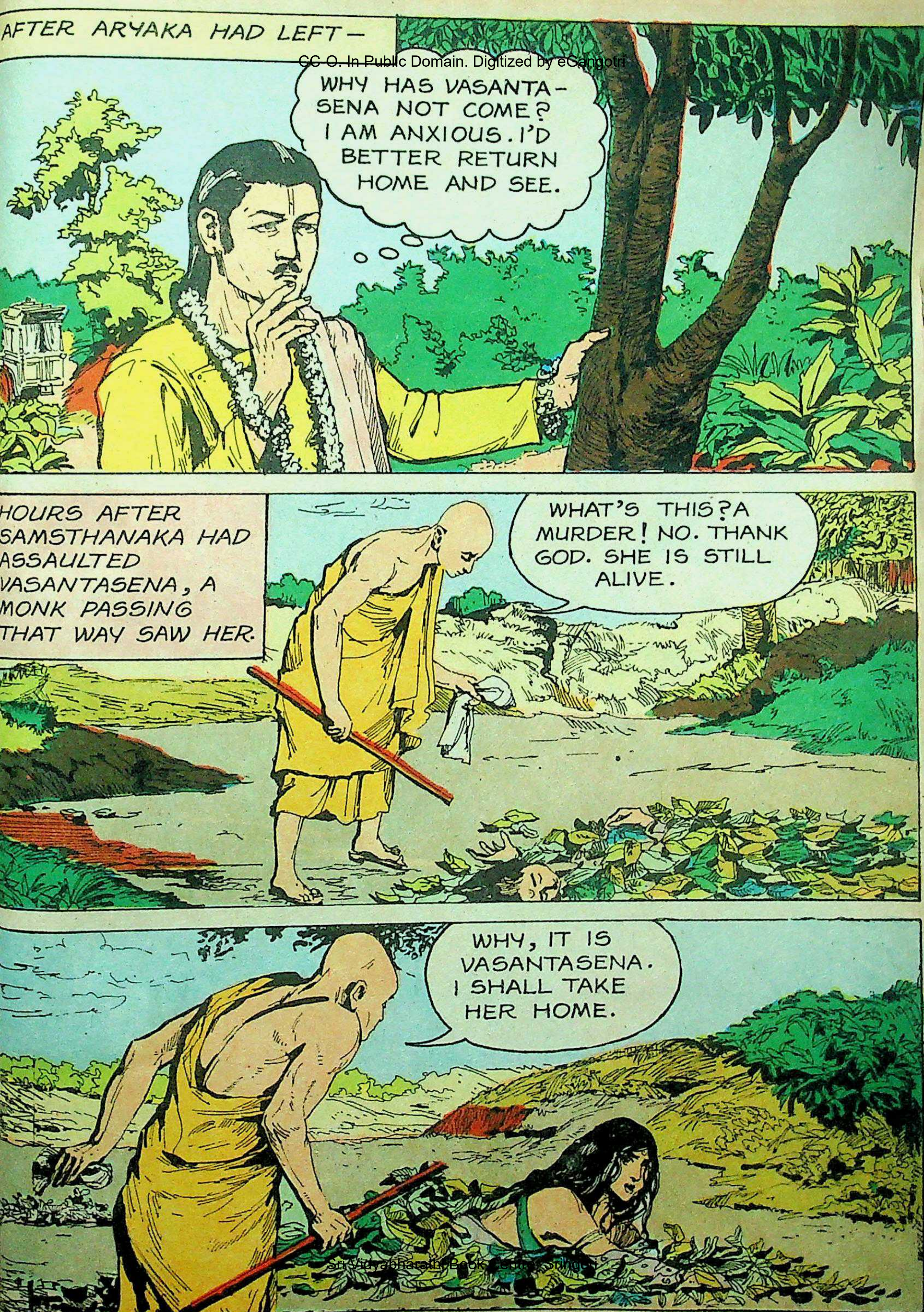
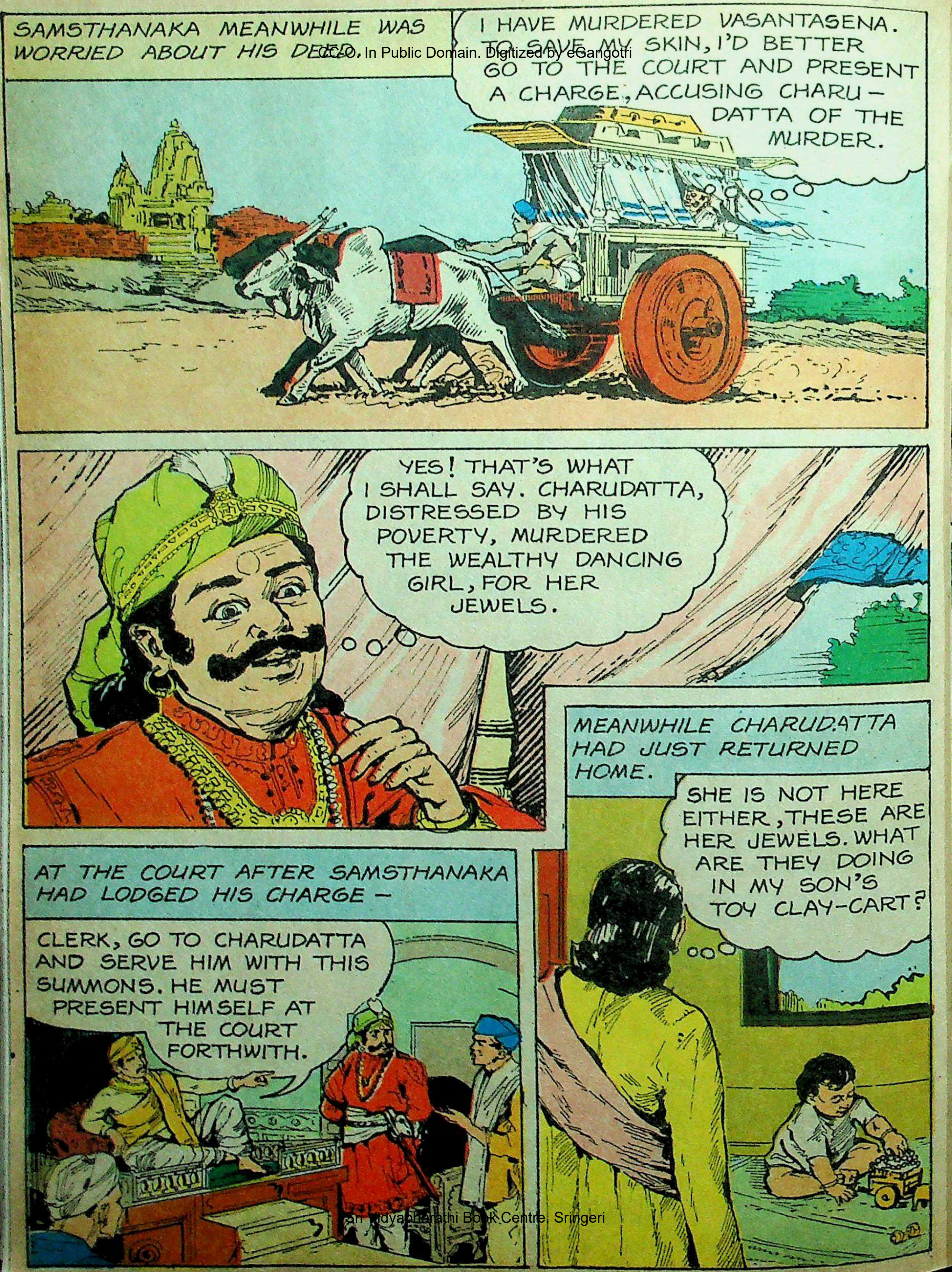
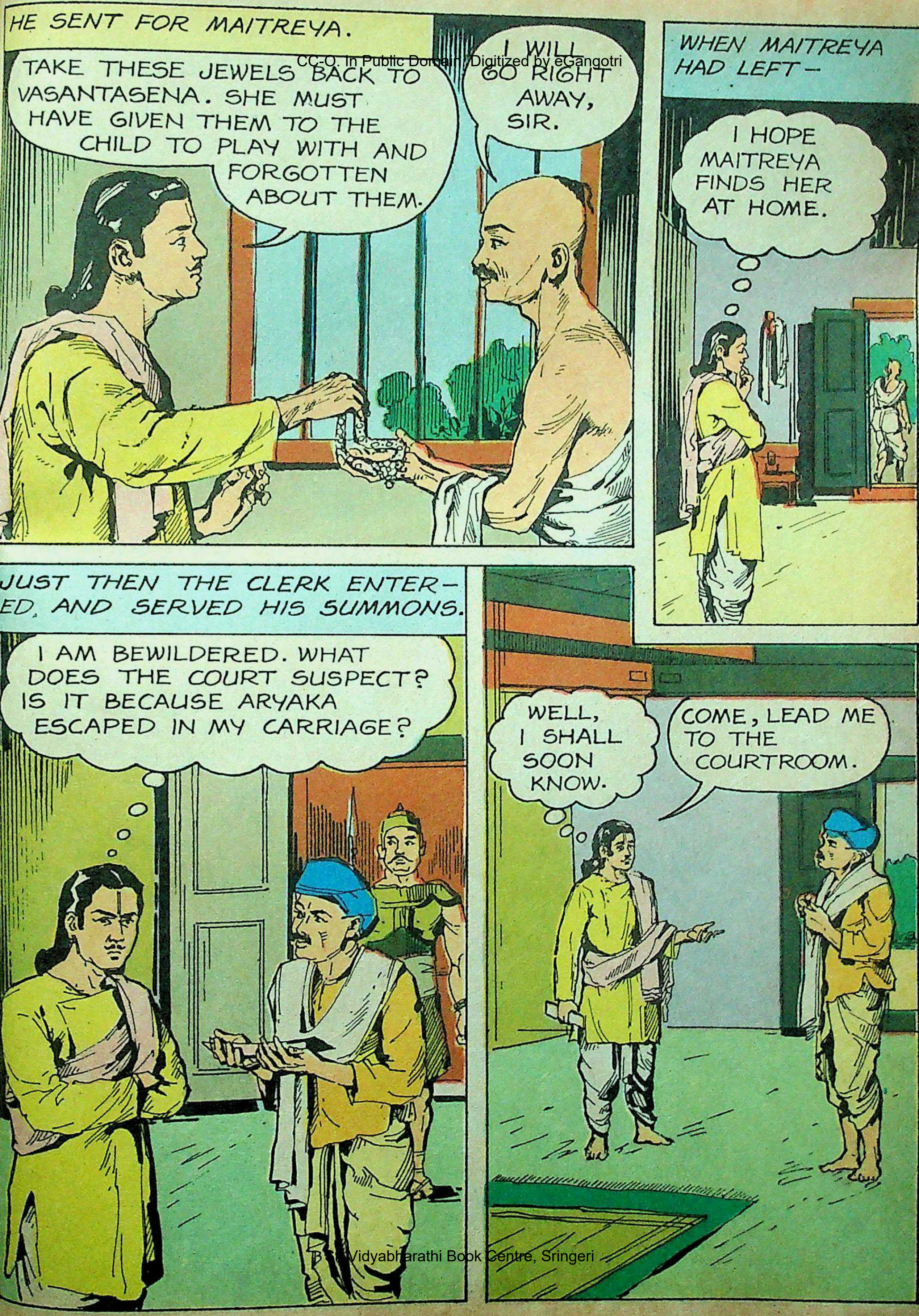
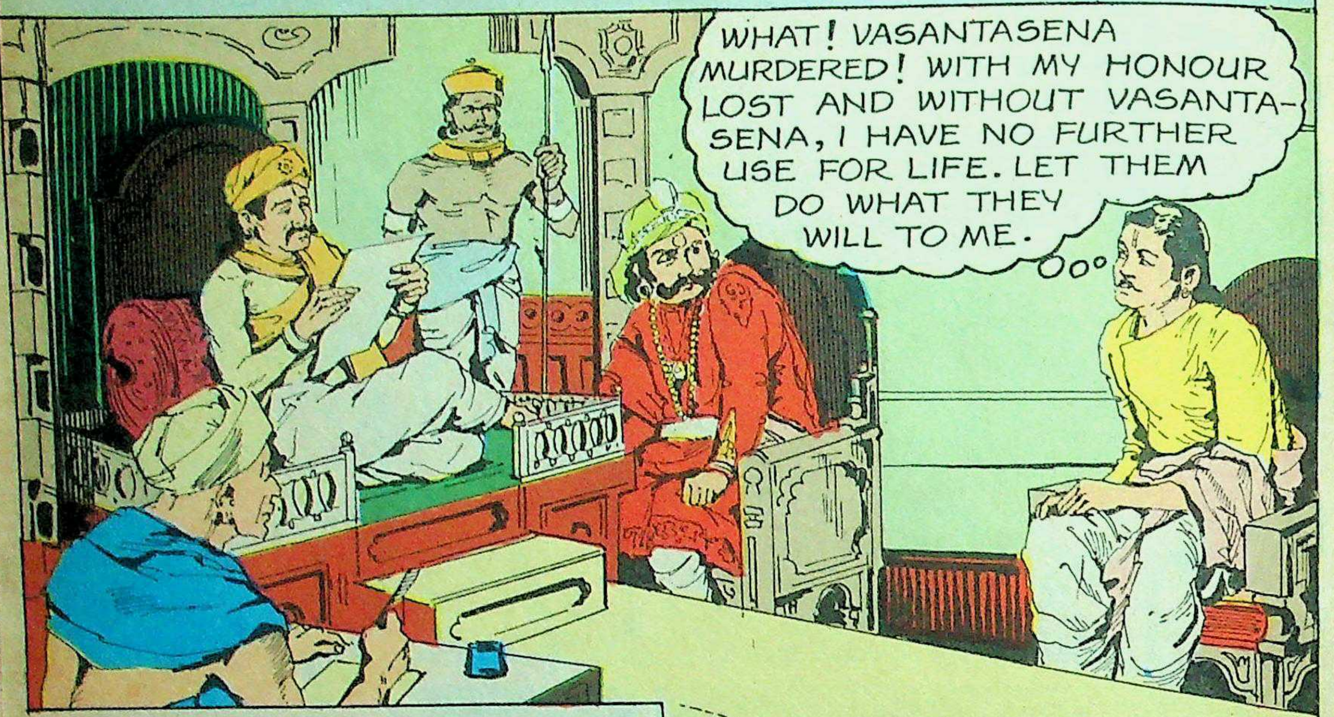

AFTER ARYAKA HAD LEFT—
WHY HAS VASANTASENA NOT COME? I AM ANXIOUS. I'D BETTER RETURN HOME AND SEE.
HOURS AFTER SAMSTHANAKA HAD ASSAULTED VASANTASENA, A MONK PASSING THAT WAY SAW HER.
WHAT'S THIS? A MURDER! NO. THANK GOD. SHE IS STILL ALIVE.
WHY, IT IS VASANTASENA. I SHALL TAKE HER HOME.

Sri Vidyabharathi Book ... Sringeri

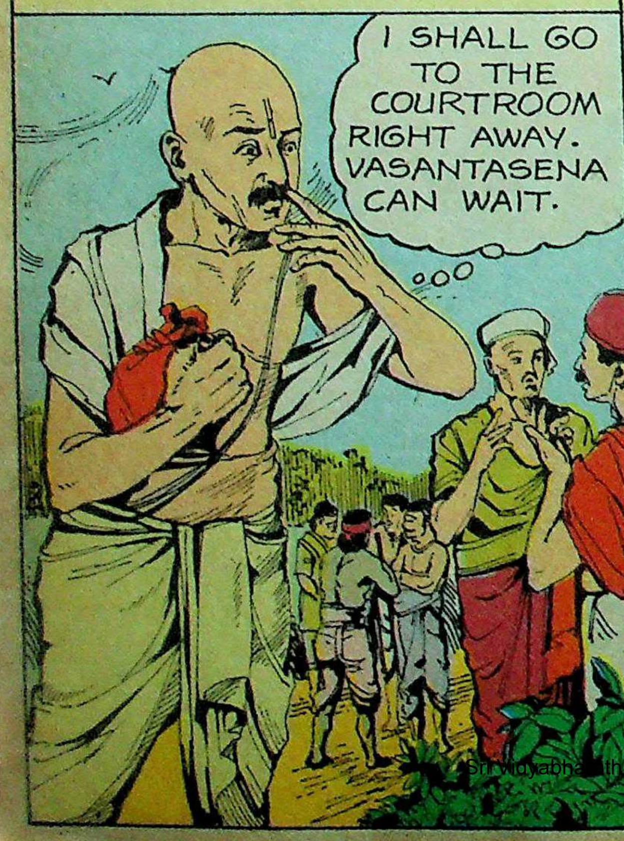

SAMSTHANAKA MEANWHILE WAS WORRIED ABOUT HIS DEED.
I HAVE MURDERED VASANTASENA. TO SAVE MY SKIN, I'D BETTER GO TO THE COURT AND PRESENT A CHARGE, ACCUSING CHARUDATTA OF THE MURDER.
YES! THAT'S WHAT I SHALL SAY. CHARUDATTA, DISTRESSED BY HIS POVERTY, MURDERED THE WEALTHY DANCING GIRL, FOR HER JEWELS.
AT THE COURT AFTER SAMSTHANAKA HAD LODGED HIS CHARGE –
CLERK, GO TO CHARUDATTA AND SERVE HIM WITH THIS SUMMONS. HE MUST PRESENT HIMSELF AT THE COURT FORTHWITH.
MEANWHILE CHARUDATTA HAD JUST RETURNED HOME.
SHE IS NOT HERE EITHER, THESE ARE HER JEWELS. WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN MY SON'S TOY CLAY-CART?


HE SENT FOR MAITREYA.
TAKE THESE JEWELS BACK TO VASANTASENA. SHE MUST HAVE GIVEN THEM TO THE CHILD TO PLAY WITH AND FORGOTTEN ABOUT THEM.
I WILL GO RIGHT AWAY, SIR.
WHEN MAITREYA HAD LEFT—
I HOPE MAITREYA FINDS HER AT HOME.
JUST THEN THE CLERK ENTERED, AND SERVED HIS SUMMONS.
I AM BEWILDERED. WHAT DOES THE COURT SUSPECT? IS IT BECAUSE ARYAKA ESCAPED IN MY CARRIAGE?
WELL, I SHALL SOON KNOW.
COME, LEAD ME TO THE COURTROOM.

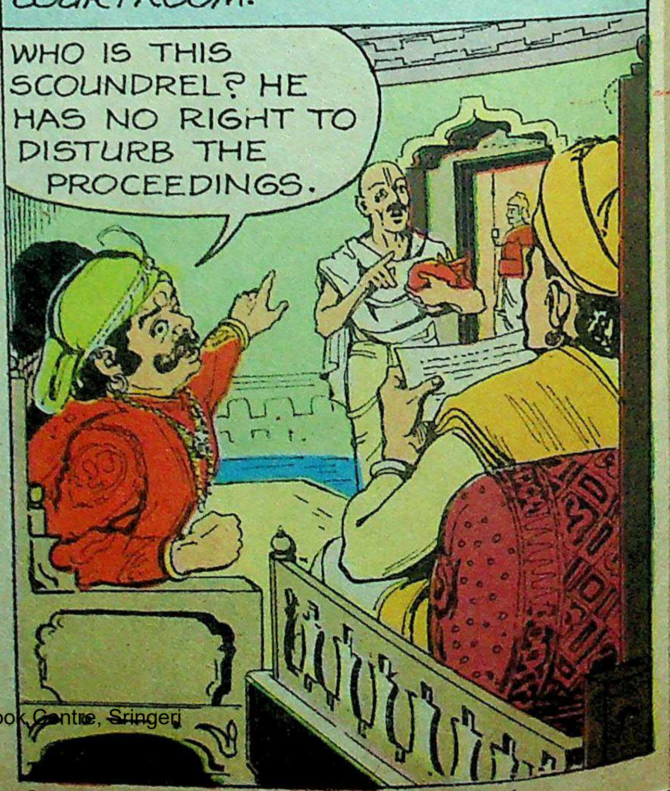
AT THE COURT THE MOMENT CHARUDATTA HEARD THE CHARGES READ OUT, HE LOST ALL INTEREST IN THE CASE.


WHAT! VASANTASENA MURDERED! WITH MY HONOUR LOST AND WITHOUT VASANTASENA, I HAVE NO FURTHER USE FOR LIFE. LET THEM DO WHAT THEY WILL TO ME.

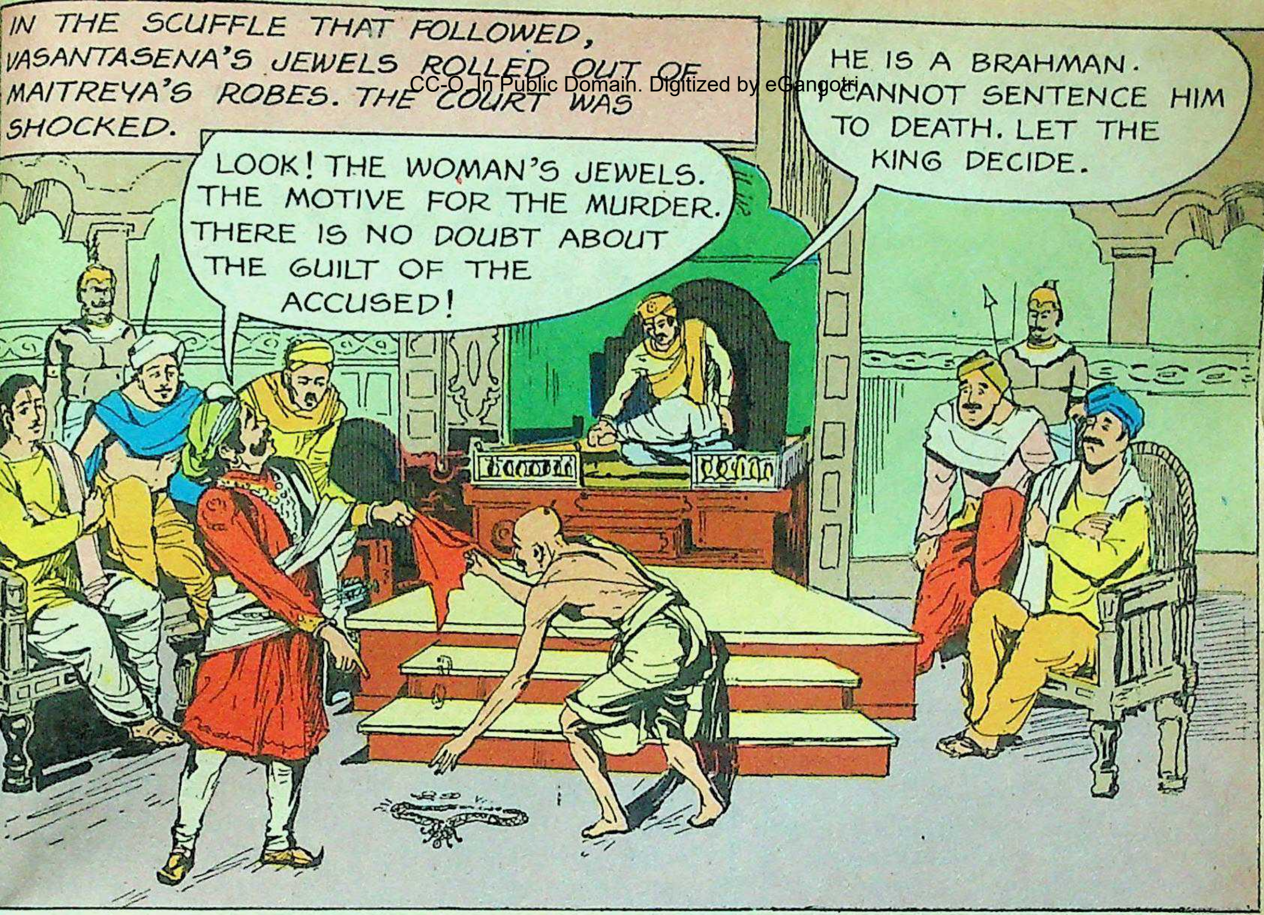
MAITREYA, ON HIS WAY TO VASANTASENA'S HOUSE, HEARD THE NEWS ABOUT CHARUDATTA FACING A TRIAL FOR MURDER.


I SHALL GO TO THE COURTROOM RIGHT AWAY. VASANTASENA CAN WAIT.

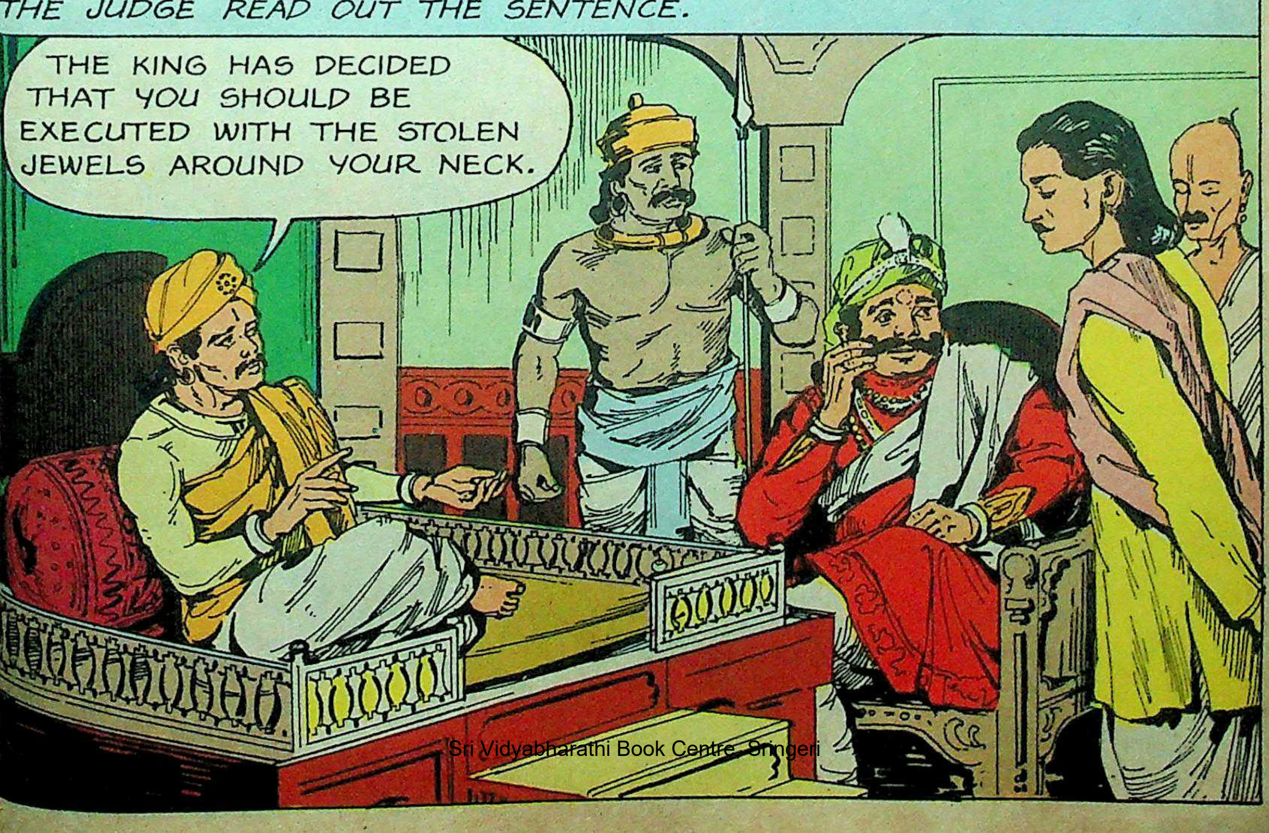
AS THE CASE PROCEEDED, MAITREYA BURST INTO THE COURTROOM.

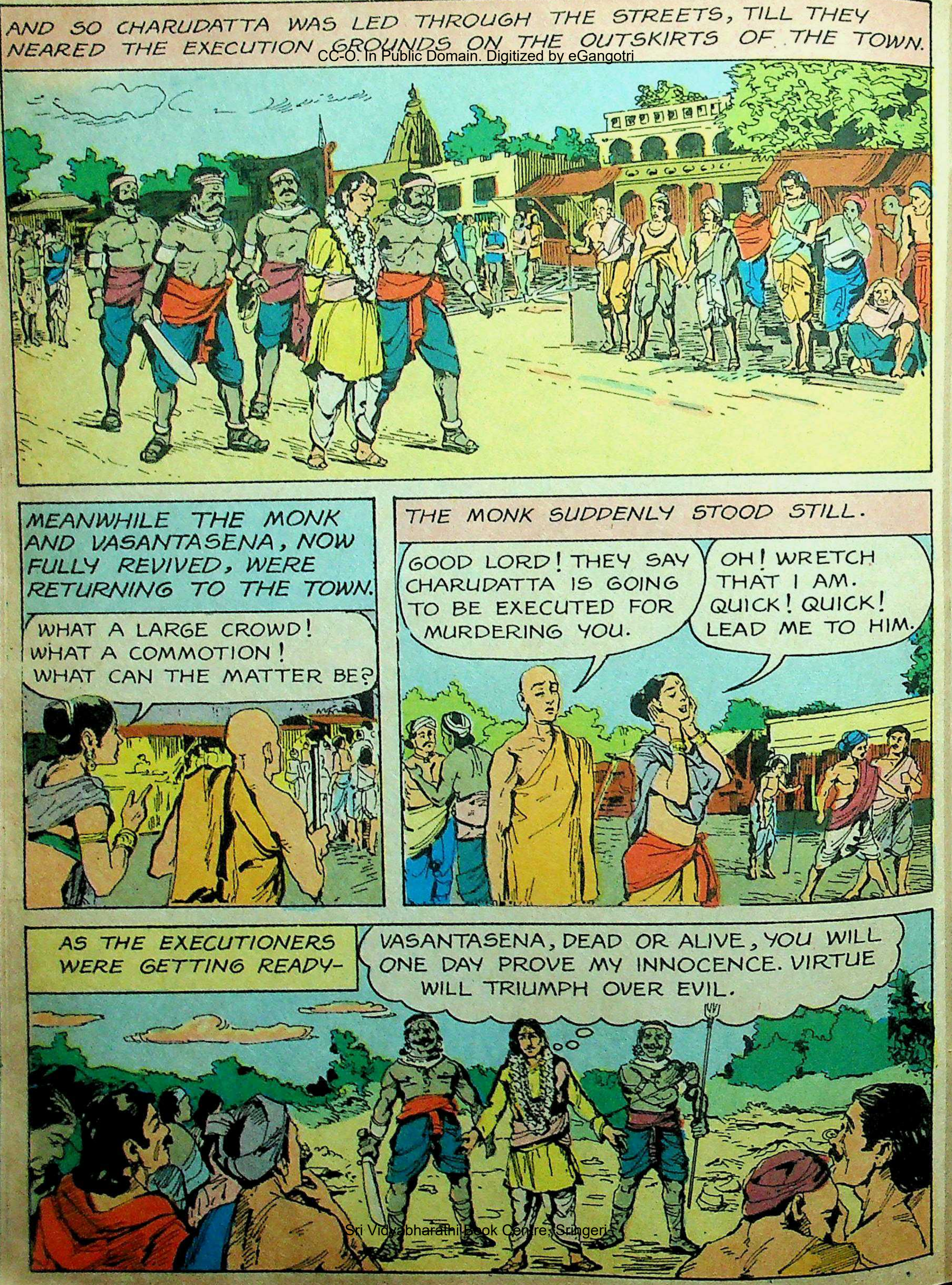

WHO IS THIS SCOUNDREL? HE HAS NO RIGHT TO DISTURB THE PROCEEDINGS.

IN THE SCUFFLE THAT FOLLOWED, VASANTASENA'S JEWELS ROLLED OUT OF MAITREYA'S ROBES. THE COURT WAS SHOCKED.

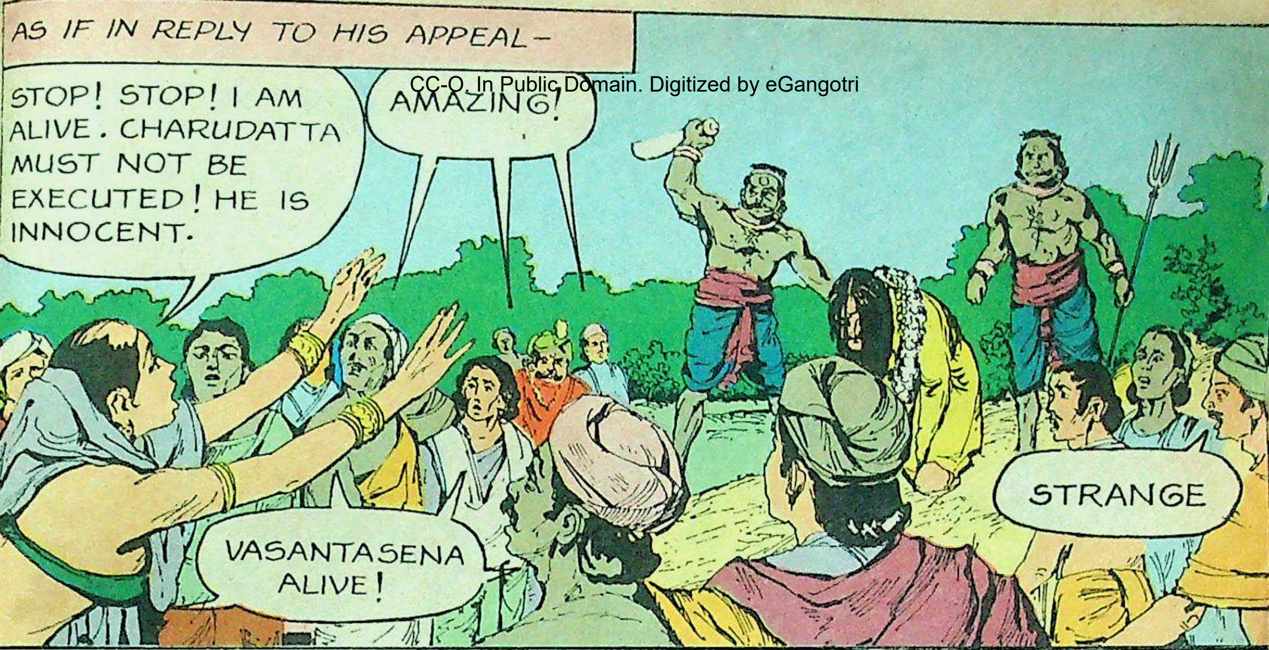

LOOK! THE WOMAN'S JEWELS. THE MOTIVE FOR THE MURDER. THERE IS NO DOUBT ABOUT THE GUILT OF THE ACCUSED!
HE IS A BRAHMAN. I CANNOT SENTENCE HIM TO DEATH. LET THE KING DECIDE.

THE MESSENGER WHO WAS SENT TO THE KING SOON RETURNED. THE JUDGE READ OUT THE SENTENCE.

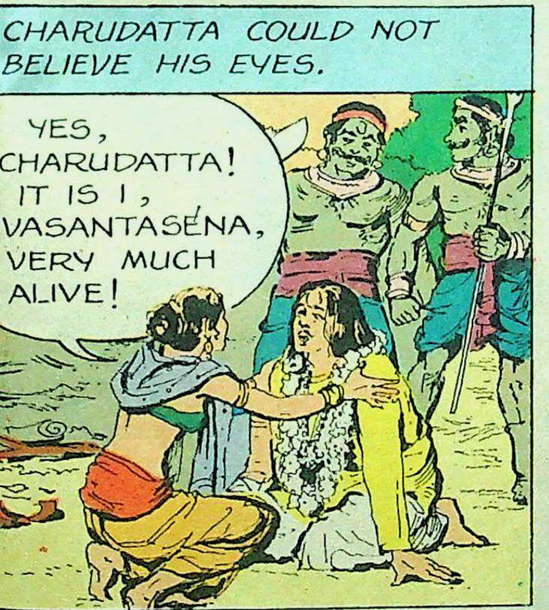

THE KING HAS DECIDED THAT YOU SHOULD BE EXECUTED WITH THE STOLEN JEWELS AROUND YOUR NECK.


AND SO CHARUDATTA WAS LED THROUGH THE STREETS, TILL THEY NEARED THE EXECUTION GROUNDS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TOWN.
MEANWHILE THE MONK AND VASANTASENA, NOW FULLY REVIVED, WERE RETURNING TO THE TOWN.
WHAT A LARGE CROWD! WHAT A COMMOTION! WHAT CAN THE MATTER BE?
THE MONK SUDDENLY STOOD STILL.
GOOD LORD! THEY SAY CHARUDATTA IS GOING TO BE EXECUTED FOR MURDERING YOU.
OH! WRETCH THAT I AM. QUICK! QUICK! LEAD ME TO HIM.
AS THE EXECUTIONERS WERE GETTING READY-
VASANTASENA, DEAD OR ALIVE, YOU WILL ONE DAY PROVE MY INNOCENCE. VIRTUE WILL TRIUMPH OVER EVIL.

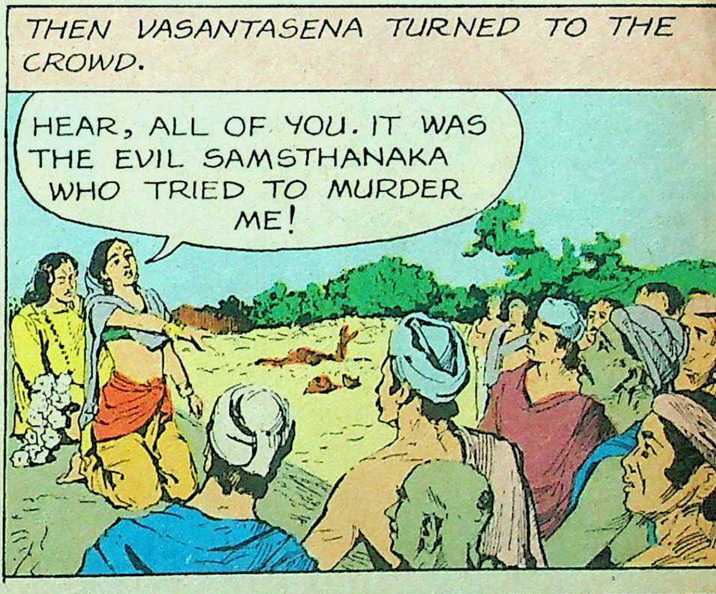
AS IF IN REPLY TO HIS APPEAL –


STOP! STOP! I AM ALIVE. CHARUDATTA MUST NOT BE EXECUTED! HE IS INNOCENT.
AMAZING!
VASANTASENA ALIVE!
STRANGE

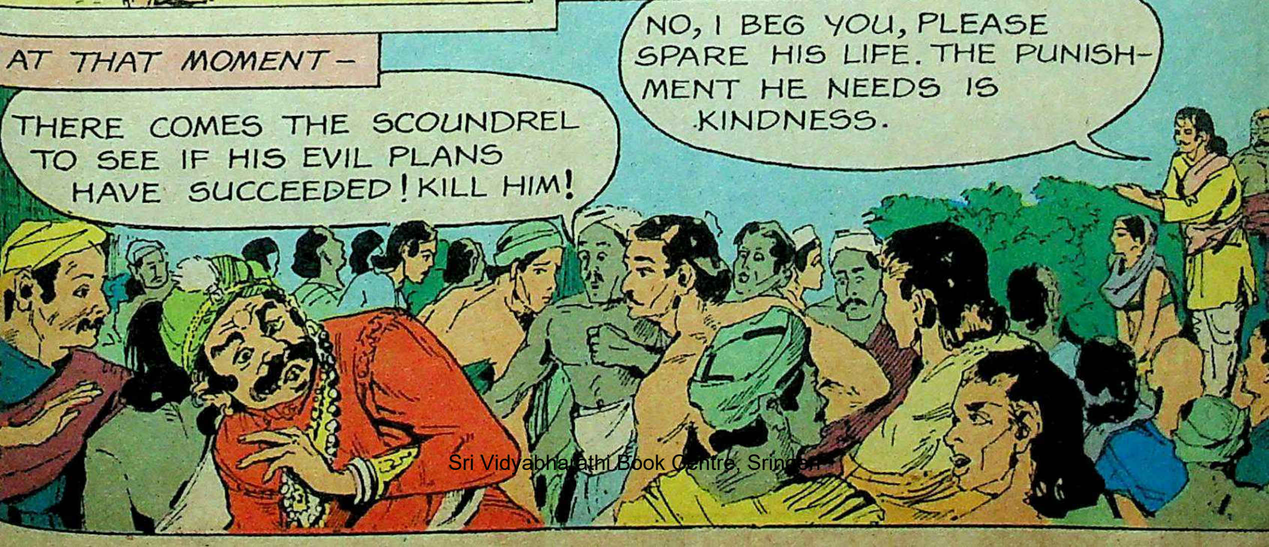
CHARUDATTA COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS EYES.


YES, CHARUDATTA! IT IS I, VASANTASENA, VERY MUCH ALIVE!

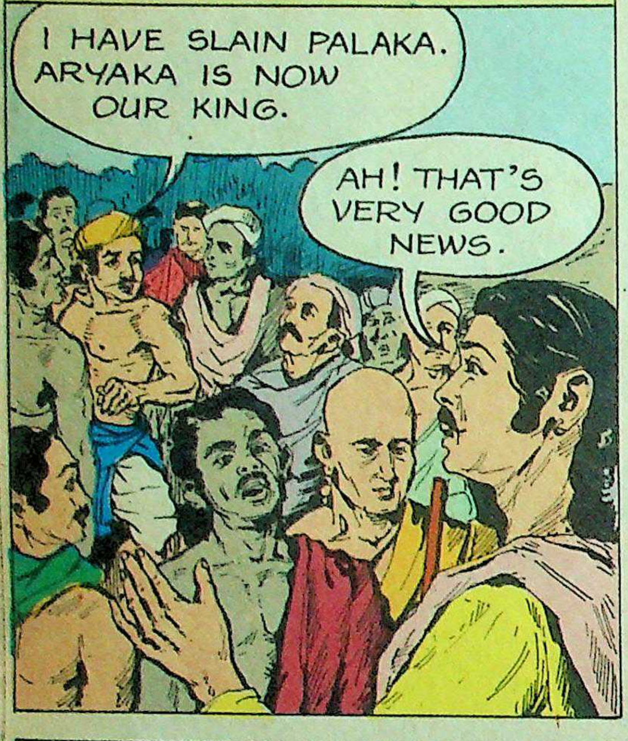
THEN VASANTASENA TURNED TO THE CROWD.

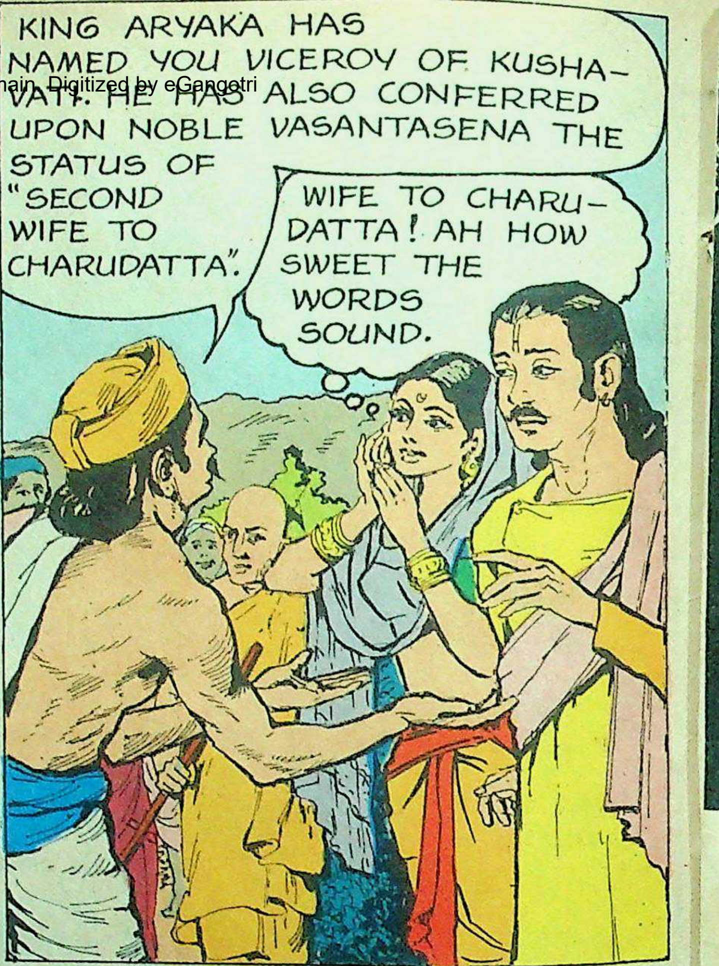

HEAR, ALL OF YOU. IT WAS THE EVIL SAMSTHANAKA WHO TRIED TO MURDER ME!

AT THAT MOMENT –

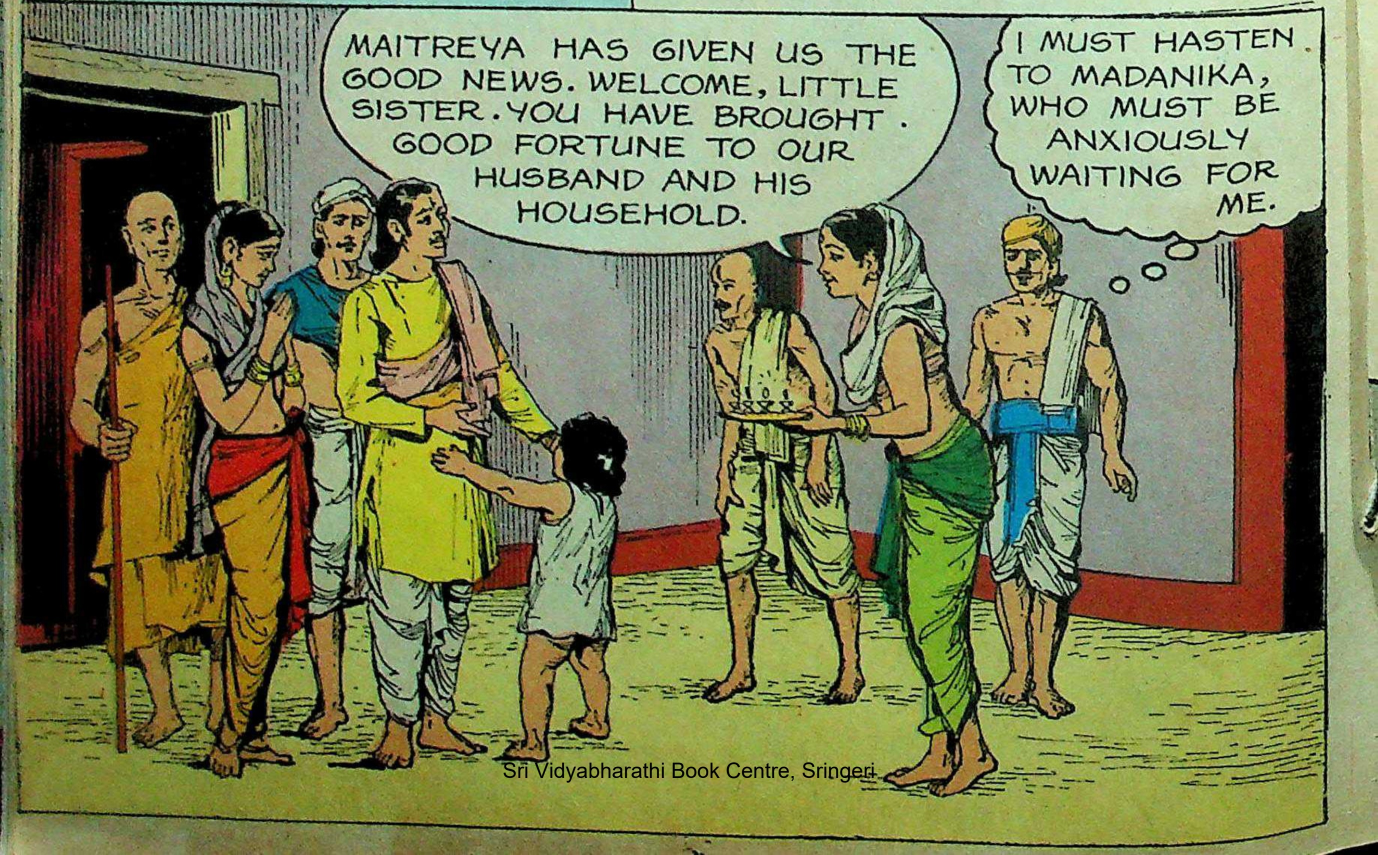

THERE COMES THE SCOUNDREL TO SEE IF HIS EVIL PLANS HAVE SUCCEEDED! KILL HIM!
NO, I BEG YOU, PLEASE SPARE HIS LIFE. THE PUNISHMENT HE NEEDS IS KINDNESS.

A MAN PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD. IT WAS SHARVILAKA.

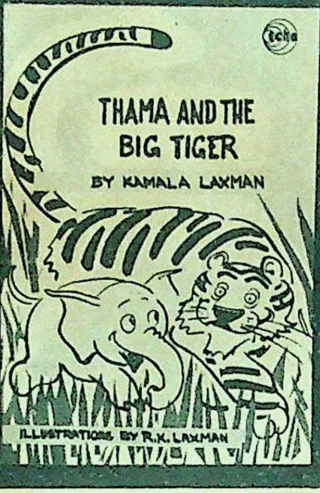

I HAVE SLAIN PALAKA. ARYAKA IS NOW OUR KING.
AH! THAT'S VERY GOOD NEWS.


KING ARYAKA HAS NAMED YOU VICEROY OF KUSHAVATI. HE HAS ALSO CONFERRED UPON NOBLE VASANTASENA THE STATUS OF "SECOND WIFE TO CHARUDATTA".
WIFE TO CHARUDATTA! AH HOW SWEET THE WORDS SOUND.

CHARUDATTA LED VASANTASENA TO HIS WIFE WHO WELCOMED THE TALENTED YOUNG DANCER.


MAITREYA HAS GIVEN US THE GOOD NEWS. WELCOME, LITTLE SISTER. YOU HAVE BROUGHT GOOD FORTUNE TO OUR HUSBAND AND HIS HOUSEHOLD.
I MUST HASTEN TO MADANIKA, WHO MUST BE ANXIOUSLY WAITING FOR ME.

THE CHILD'S WORLD OF THAMA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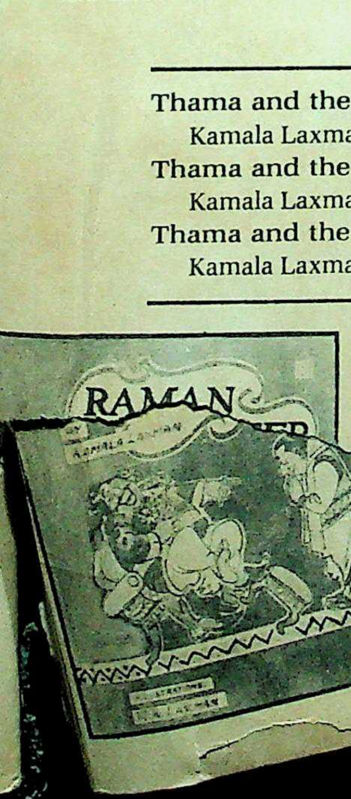
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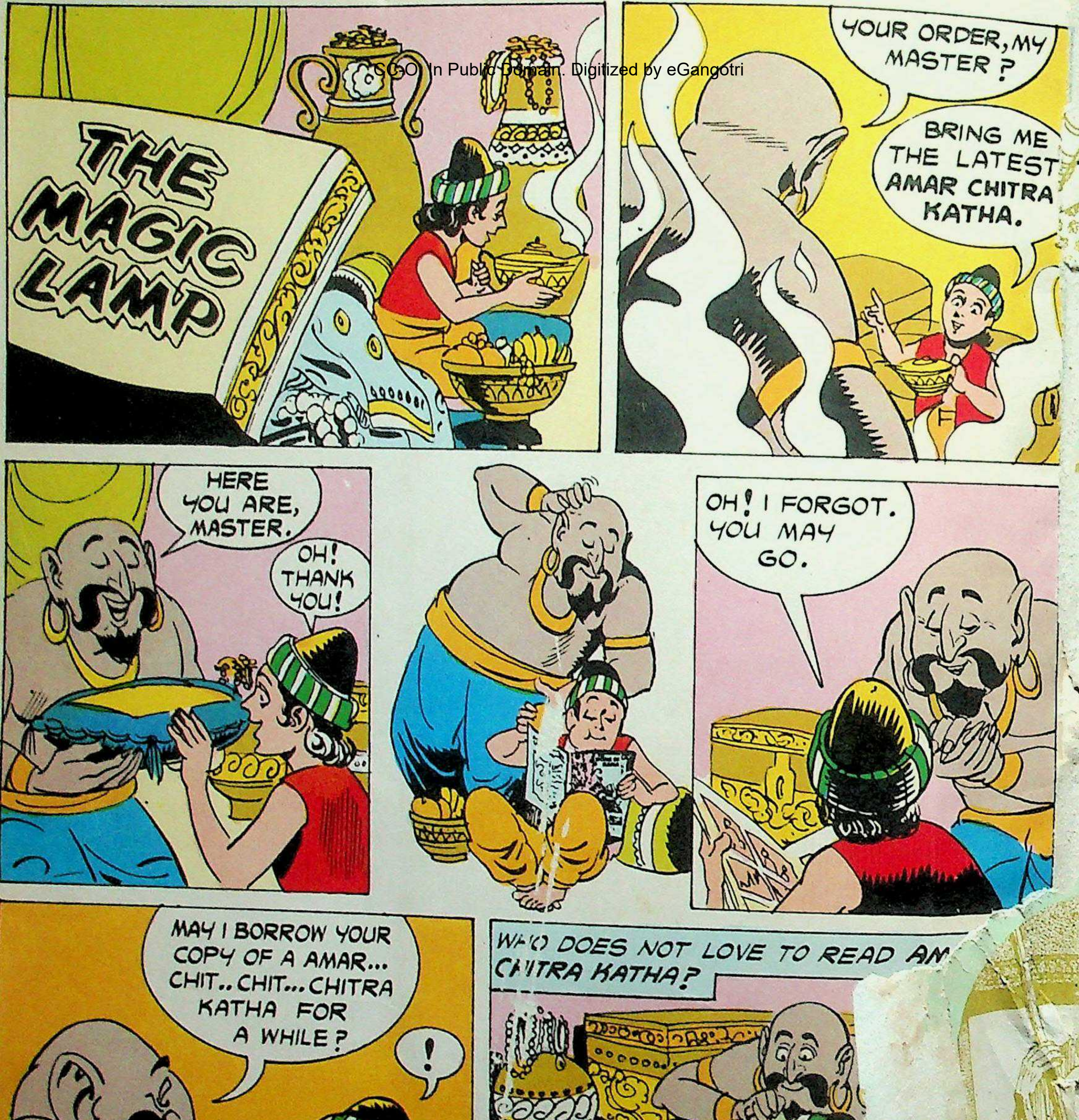
THE MAGIC LAMP
YOUR ORDER, MY MASTER?
BRING ME THE LATEST AMAR CHITRA KATHA.
HERE YOU ARE, MASTER.
OH! THANK YOU!
OH! I FORGOT. YOU MAY GO.
MAY I BORROW YOUR COPY OF A AMAR... CHIT.. CHIT... CHITRA KATHA FOR A WHILE?
!
THE SONS OF RAM
WHO DOES NOT LOVE TO READ AM
CHITRA KATHA?

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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